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JENNIFER FRIESEN/FOR METRO

Seven-year-old Lawson celebrates his team's win with Flames defenceman Kris Russell, left, and centreman Matt Stajan.

FLAMES CAN'T HOLD CANDLE TO TIGERS

Young team wins for 35th time at hospital

City to get 911 texting

POLICE SERVICES

Discreet tool should become available to all in next 2 years

Lucie Edwardson
Metro | Calgary

Imagine you're the victim of domestic abuse. Perhaps you're witnessing a crime in progress. Fear grips you, unable to call 911 for fear of drawing attention to yourself.

Soon, you won't have to be afraid. Calgary 911 wants you to know they're working on a solution: Text to 911.

"The technology is there, it's in our budget, it's been approved and we are moving forward," said Richard Hinse, Commander at Calgary 911.

Currently, Calgary 911 has a program in place for deaf, hard of hearing and speech impaired Calgarians that allows them to text to 911. But in the next two years, Hinse said, the technology will be available to all Calgarians.

"I can think of so many reasons that it'd benefit Calgary — domestic violence probably being number one — but there would be other instances where people would be afraid to be talking on their phone, but because texting in public is so common they could still get in touch with us," he said.

Maggie MacKillop, executive director of HomeFront, a non-profit that collaborates with the justice system, police and community agencies to free families from domestic violence, said they would welcome and promote the program.

"Anything that improves access to services that provides assistance and help to victims of domestic violence, abuse or conflict is always what we need to be striving to do," she said.

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metro NEWS

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Drought in South Africa could make rooibos teas scarce and pricey. **Business**

Driver still looking for Uber insurance answers

RIDESHARING

Former cabbie feels the service is 'beating around the bush'

Helen Pike
Metro | Calgary

A Calgary driver waiting to get behind the wheel for Uber has yet to launch his app and pick up passengers after his burning questions on insurance have gone unanswered by the ride-share company.

Wesley Gould signed on to what he hoped would be a good pastime as his business begins to ramp up, but was stopped dead in his tracks after he questioned Uber's mysterious insurance model.

"I just want to feel Uber out a little bit, for the month of December and January, maybe put in a few hours a day to keep me busy," Gould said.

Gould has been a driver and owned part of a cab company out east, so he's been in the business, but he says something about Uber's insurance policies isn't quite right.

"I have a brand new car, and I just want to make sure I'm covered for this car," Gould said.

> **I have a brand new car, and I just want to make sure I'm covered for this car.**
> Wesley Gould

"I'd like to see what the exclusions are, limitations are, I'd like to understand them a little better, so I'm more informed … for some reason I feel that they are beating around the bush a little bit."

Gould has gone to several information sessions in person, and also contacted Uber over insurance issues via email, and he says he's not alone in questioning the ride-sharing company's policies.

But an Uber spokesperson said they're upfront about the company's insurance coverage.

"Drivers sign up in different ways. We share (insurance information) with them in person, we have blog posts that describe this in very clear detail… And it's important that when drivers have questions they can ask support, email in to the ops team, and we're happy to provide them with support," said Xavier Van Chau of Uber Canada.

In Alberta, the province's Insurance Superintendent has publicly voiced issues with Uber's insurance policies claiming the supplemental policy offered by the popular ride-share service doesn't provide the proper coverage.

In Calgary Mayor Naheed Nenshi has echoed the same sentiments, warning drivers who participate in a vehicle-for hire under their own insurance and Uber's plan, could be faced with zero coverage in a crash.

Uber spokesperson Xavier Van Chau says the company is very clear and upfront with drivers about their insurance details and are happy to answer drivers' questions. METRO FILE

"Edmonton and Calgary are looking for an insurance solution and you know I think as we continue to work with Intact and regulators we are trying to bring solutions that are specific to ride sharing to market," said Chau.

"Currently we have … shared ourinsurance."

According to Chau, AIG Canada is responsible for underwriting their coverage. Their website states partners are covered by commercial auto insurance in addition to any insurance coverage maintained by the driver-partner.

Metro's attempts to contact AIG have gone unanswered.

GOVERNMENT

Province still working on insurance issue

The Alberta government is working in a "cross-ministry" committee to explore safety, licensing, insurance and consumer protection when it comes to ride-sharing services. Although Mayor Naheed Nenshi has said a solution is months away, Aaron Manton, press secretary for the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation, didn't give a set deadline on the committee's talks.

"We recognize that stakeholders, our municipal partners, and members of the public are eager for answers, but this is a complex issue and we are taking the time to examine all sides and identify a solution that protects the safety of Albertans while ensuring a level playing field for vehicle-for-hire services," Manton wrote in a statement. METRO

INJUNCTION

Hearing on city's request resumes on Friday

The City of Calgary's request for a court injunction to stop drivers from operating will be heard again Friday in what's expected to be a "full day special," according to the city's lawyer. Lawyer Christian Popowich will be representing drivers and Colleen Sinclair representing the City of Calgary. In the request, the city is asking for court intervention to help stop drivers from operating in the city while insurance matters are being cleared up. METRO

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IN BRIEF

Police seek public's assistance in finding missing man

Calgary police said they have been unable to locate a missing Calgary man following an extensive investigation into his disappearance.

Clayton Visser, 44, was last seen at approximately 4 p.m. on Oct. 21 at his residence in the 5400 block of 10 Avenue SE.

Police said although his disappearance is out of character there is no evidence to suspect foul play is involved.

Visser is described as Caucasian, 270 lbs., 6'4" tall with brown hair and hazel eyes. He has both ears as well as his left eyebrow pierced.

Investigators are also trying to locate his vehicle, a black 2013 Ford F-150 with Alberta plate SBE 179. METRO

Alberta man charged in seniors' deaths in 2010 facing unrelated charges

A man charged in the deaths of an Edmonton-area couple in 2010 has been charged with attempting to obstruct justice in a separate case.

RCMP Insp. Gibson Glavin says Travis Vader was arrested on Nov. 12 near Evansburg, west of Edmonton. Vader was charged earlier this year after an alleged altercation involving his mother's boyfriend at her residence.

Glavin says Vader has been charged with obstructing the course of justice in a judicial proceeding, failing to comply with a recognizance, specifically making contact directly or indirectly with someone he wasn't permitted to do so and failing to keep the peace.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

This bus stop for route three is near the proposed location of the mini roundabout. JEREMY SIMES/ FOR METRO

Pilot project aimed at keeping buses out

TRANSIT

Not everyone is confident a roundabout will solve issue

Helen Pike
Metro | Calgary

A residential street once used as a snow detour for Calgary Transit buses might find some relief in a pilot meant to keep the huge vehicles off the narrow neighbourhood road.

But residents in the area are skeptical the project will help turn the tables in their favour.

Calgary Transit is getting ready to pilot a mini roundabout where Candle Crescent meets Elbow Drive SW to stop buses from having to turn down a quiet residential street in the event of a snow detour.

Candle Crescent Boulevard SW has been the not-so-ideal turnaround spot for Calgary Transit buses on snowy days, as the mammoths can't quite climb back up the hill to Fish Creek Park in icy conditions. Residents of the small street have been accommodating over the years, but after a snowy winter a few years ago, solutions had to be sought to satisfy neighbours looking for relief.

"We wanted to come up with some solution that was going to be good for everybody," said Neil McKendrick, manager of Transit Operational Planning. "What's happening this winter is going to be painted lines on the roadway … the final plan will have a proper concrete island and it will require some reworking of the curve so the bus can make the turn."

According to McKendrick, in the past residents have rolled up their sleeves to help push buses stuck on their street — something this mini roundabout should eliminate.

Sylvia Smith who lives just on the corner of Elbow Drive and Candle Crescent hasn't been pleased with the transportation network's use of her street as a turnaround point.

"The buses have literally swung onto our yard, ripped up our grass, our sod, taken down the stop sign, and the city doesn't give a care about any of this stuff," Smith said. She's had to ask her husband to stand back and watch instead of running out to help a bus stuck in snow.

Smith said she's not sure how a painted roundabout will help motorists and doubts buses will be able to swing around in such a tight space.

"It's not feasible, you can't do it," she said. "There's no way the bus is going to be able to turn around."

DOMESTIC CONFLICT

Volume of calls on rise

Lucie Edwardson
Metro | Calgary

Domestic conflict is on the rise in Calgary, according to city police, who said they've responded to a 16 per cent higher domestic conflict call volume than the same time last year.

Police said they typically respond to between 17,000 and 18,000 domestic conflict calls each year, with around 12,700 of those occurring by the end of September.

However, by the end of this September, CPS said they had responded to 15,252 domestic conflict calls, a 16 per cent increase over the same time last year.

HomeFront, a community organization that works to end domestic abuse, recently released a heat map of Calgary showing how widespread domestic abuse is across the city and how it doesn't discriminate based on economic or regional differences.

Staff Sgt. Rob Davidson said although there's a high volume of calls, only a small portion result in criminal charges.

"What we do is we try to assess and figure out if there is anything else CPS needs to do to help this family, and if the answer to that is yes, then we assign it to the domestic conflict unit," he said.

He said domestic conflict isn't always violent.

"Domestic conflict is extremely complex, and it makes it very challenging, because the violence is the end result, it's usually not the underlying precursor or stressor," he said.

Davidson said although 18,000 seems like a large number, domestic conflict doesn't necessarily mean domestic abuse.

"We're using the term domestic conflict, we're just simply saying that there is something in that family that resulted in the police to be involved," he said.

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Coun. Andre Chabot wants to cap the maximum floor area of secondary suites in the city at 100 square metres. METRO FILE

Councillors seek to ease regulations

SECONDARY SUITES

Lot width, maximum size could change if motion OK'd

Brodie Thomas
Metro | Calgary

One of them wants secondary suites to go citywide. The other regularly votes against secondary suites.

Together, they're putting forward a motion to loosen the regulations on the controversial apartments.

Councillors Gian-Carlo Carra and Andre Chabot both agree that two of the regulations regarding secondary and backyard suites are standing in the way of many would-be landlords, so they're putting forth a motion to amend on Monday,

They want to reduce the minimum parcel width down to nine metres from 11 metres, and they want to increase the maximum floor area from 75 square metres up to 100 square metres. "Those were two pieces that generally over-regulated the marketplace," said Carra, who is unabashedly in favour of secondary suites.

He wants to take the floor-size motion just slightly further, adding a line in the bylaw that allows for 100 metres or an entire basement footprint. He thinks that would save people from unnecessarily blocking off a few square metres of liveable space just for the sake of meeting regulations.

Chabot, on the other hand, wants to cap it at 100 metres.

"If you have a 3,000-square foot bungalow — that gives you a potential 3,000-square foot secondary suite," said Chabot.

100

The motion seeks to reduce minimum parcel width to nine meters from 11 metres, and increase the maximum floor area from 75 sq. m. to 100 sq. m.

That would be about 271 square metres. The additional clause will be voted on separately.

Carra said he had hoped to have these changes made when secondary suites were approved in wards 7, 8, 9 and 11. But he's happy to make the changes now, later rather than sooner.

Chabot said he's happy to remove any inconsistencies in the bylaw.

HEALTH

Hepatitis A found at Lake Louise resort

Alberta Health Services has issued a public alert after a lounge worker at the Lake Louise ski resort was confirmed to have hepatitis A.

The liver infection is highly contagious and can be spread through food and water.

Health officials say customers who ate or drank hot beverages at the Powderkeg Lounge in Lake Louise between Nov. 6 and 8 may have been exposed. Alberta Health Services is offering a vaccine to those people.

The health agency says patrons who consumed cold beverages are not at risk of exposure and do not need a vaccine.

Clinics are being held in Calgary and Banff in the next couple of days — the vaccine is only effective if administered within two weeks of exposure.

"While we believe the risk to the public is low, hepatitis A is a serious infection," Dr. Judy MacDonald, medical health officer for the Calgary zone, said in a release Thursday.

"A vaccine administered within 14 days of exposure can greatly reduce the risk for patrons who consumed food or hot beverages at this location during this time frame."

Symptoms may include tiredness, poor appetite, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain and fever. An infected person's urine will turn dark and the eyes and skin will turn yellow.

Some people, especially young children, may have hepatitis A infection without any symptoms, but they are still infectious.

Risk of transmission is reduced through thorough washing of hands with soap and water.

Lake Louise is about to host World Cup men's and women's downhill ski races. The men arrive early next week for training runs ahead of races Nov. 28-29. The women compete Dec. 4-6.

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Preparing for refugee students

The Alberta Government has asked Alberta schools to prepare for the large number of refugee students expected to enter the province — about 3,000 Syrian refugees are expected to enter the province by the end of the year. Anne-Marie Hagel and Christine Chatel with the Calgary Catholic School District walked Metro through the student registration process for newcomers. **Aaron Chatha** METRO

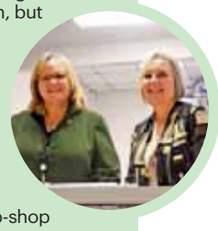
Step 1

THE FRONT DESK

As soon as a day or two after entering the country, newcomers, including refugees, arrive at the reception centre and sign in, but it helps to make an appointment.

"Because then we're able to provide an interpreter for the family," said Hagel.

Hagel said they try to get families in as quick as possible. If they've only just landed in the country, the reception centre is aimed to not only get students registered, but provide a one-stop-shop for all their needs.



Step 2

FAMILY ASSESSMENT

An assessor, who is usually a teacher, and an interpreter then bring in the family to review all their documents and get family background information to inform the assessor what kind of family support systems they may need. It also lets them know what skill set the student is already coming into the system with.

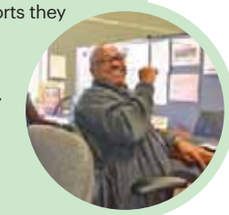
"We know they may have gaps in their education, so this makes sure we are addressing those gaps," said Hagel.

Step 3

SETTLEMENT SERVICES

The parents are then taken to speak with an in-school settlement worker. This worker will help connect the family to supports they need.

This includes information on employment, access to financial supports, recreation information, language classes, housing and addressing medical needs.



Step 4

LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT

While the parents are speaking with a settlement worker, the student is taken aside and assessed on their language abilities. When a student starts school, this information will be made available to the teacher, taking any guesswork out of the equation.

"So the teacher knows when a student goes to the classroom, how much support she needs — does she know any English? Is she good in reading, writing? There are lots of different variables," said Chatel.

Step 5

PSYCHOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL SUPPORT

If the assessor, settlement team, school or the parents themselves identify a need, psychological supports are available on site at the reception centre.

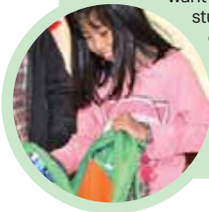
For refugee students who have dealt with trauma, they can be connected to a mental health professional who will help them through the process.

As well, a multicultural team is on-site to help parents learn more about the school system, how the culture is different from their home country and what their responsibilities are.

Step 6

TIME FOR SCHOOL

The parents and students are back at the reception desk, but now they have information packages and completed registrations. "By the time they're out the door, they're in the system and the school is aware they're coming," said Hagel. "They can start the next day or even that day if they want it." At Hagel's reception centre, students are also given a backpack of goodies to prepare them for school. Kirsten (left) just finished her language assessment. She had only been in the country two days, and said she was very excited to start school and meet her teacher.



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YEAR END COUNTDOWN

ANIMAL WELFARE

41 neglected dogs surrendered to SPCA

The Alberta SPCA has taken in 41 dogs from a southern Alberta rural property.

A release from the Alberta Animal Rescue Crew Society said 40 of the dogs were small breed dogs, and the remaining dog was a border collie.

The owner of the dogs was a breeder, who surrendered the animals to the SPCA voluntarily.

"The dogs were all severely matted, and smelled heavily of urine. Many of them have rotten teeth, eye infections, hernias and severe ear infections," said Deanna Thompson, executive director of AARCS.

The dogs have been placed with AARCS and will eventually be placed for adoption.

"We are very happy that the Alberta SPCA was able to step in and that we were able provide these animals with a second chance at a life they deserve as beloved family pets," said Thompson.

> **It is heartbreaking to see any animal in this condition.**
> Deanna Thompson

"We hope that the public realizes that when they purchase a dog at a pet store or online with little or no information of where that puppy came from, that they are supporting backyard breeding operations such as this. One must take the time to think about the parents of that puppy in the window or cute puppy pictures online."

AARCS said it will take time before the dogs are ready for adoption as many require extensive medical care, dental work and spay/neuter surgeries. They estimate it will cost the organization over $20,000 to provide the care needed. METRO

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Sara Kassa, a subject of the documentary project Under an Umbrella We Met, attended the opening at Cannibale Bridgeland, where she said she hopes her role in the project can change people's perception of refugee. JENNIFER FRIESEN/FOR METRO

Take a walk in the shoes of a refugee

DOCUMENTARY

Exhibit aims for understanding of cultures and circumstances

Aaron Chatha
Jennifer Friesen
Metro | Calgary

Sara Kassa spent Thursday afternoon watching people step into her shoes and listen to her story: an architect and a Syrian who moved to Calgary just three-and-a-half years ago.

She still has family who have been on boats to Greece, are currently stranded between Turkey and Jordan, or are still in Syria.

"It's difficult. I don't want people to judge Syrians, so I always try to keep quiet when I overhear some of the things people say," said Kassa. "I'm scared, because what if they don't like me and that reflects on every Syrian?"

Kassa shared her story with the Calgary Centre for Global Community, and it was featured in Thursday's Under an Umbrella We Met event.

Salima Stanley-Bhanji, CEO of the centre, spent two months collecting interviews from Jordan, Bangladesh and Calgary. The event featured six video interviews and allowed the viewer to physically step into the subject's shoes, as Stanley-Bhanji had collected them during her research. The purpose of the exhibit was simple: to create unity among people from around the world.

"What we want people to take away is that there's this common thread amongst us all," she said. "Right now the world is really being challenged. Each of us is being challenged to decide what kind of city, country, global community we want to have, and whether that community is based on division, based on fear or based on unity, openness and understanding."

Kassa hopes the event helped people to learn that everyone has something they can relate to. She said she understands the fear people have when they let refugees into their country, but she hopes they can understand those refugees are in dire need of a safe place.

> **Each of us is being challenged to decide what kind of city, country, global community we want to have.**
> Salima Stanley-Bhanji, Calgary Centre for Global Community

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CRIME

ALERT bust seizes handgun, cocaine

An investigation that dates back to October came to a close Nov. 12 when ALERT seized a handgun and an estimated $213,300 worth of drugs from two Calgary homes.

At a traffic stop, ALERT arrested Franz Cabrera, 21, and Alexsandra Poovong, 22. With the help of Calgary police, RCMP and Alberta Sheriffs searched the suspects' homes, one apartment in Killarney and a home in the Woodbine area of southwest Calgary.

ALERT found and seized:

- A Walther P22 handgun with serial number defaced
- 882 grams of cocaine
- 834 grams of methamphetamine
- Packaging materials, digital scales, score sheets and a cocaine press
- $3,940 cash, proceeds of crime

Cabrera and Poovong have been charged with:

- Possession of a restricted weapon with ammunition
- Possession of a restricted firearm while in a vehicle
- Unauthorized possession of a firearm
- Defacing a serial number on a firearm
- Possession for the purpose of trafficking
- Possession of proceeds of crime

Cabrera also faces five charges of breach of recognizance as he was awaiting trial on a charge of second-degree murder for his alleged role in a November 2013 homicide.

Anyone with information about drug or gang activity in their neighbourhood is encouraged to call police at 403-266-1234 or Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477. METRO

The handgun seized CONTRIBUTED

Beware added sugar in drinks: Dietician

HEALTH

More than 12% of Albertans drink specialty coffees daily

Jeremy Simes
For Metro | Calgary

What would it take for you to cut a daily soda — or two — from your diet?

What about that venti vanilla latte?

According to a recent survey by Alberta Health, 12.7 per cent of adult Albertans consume one or more sweetened speciality coffees per day, 10.9 per cent guzzle one or more sodas, and 5.5 per cent down sweetened fruit and sports drinks.

The problem lies with the added sugar that's found in those drinks, according to Jessica Begg, a registered dietician and nutritionist with Shift Nutrition.

She said the substance can harm your health if you consume too much.

Added sugar includes glucose, fructose and table sugar, and sugars found in honey, syrups and baked goods.

She said natural sugars — which don't need to be reduced — are in fruits, vegetables milk and yogurt.

Sodas are one source of added sugar in people's diets, according to a recent Alberta Health survey. JEREMY SIMES/FOR METRO

Consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages are associated with obesity, type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease and tooth cavities, the survey said.

The World Health Organization recommends that no more than 10 per cent — or about 12 teaspoons per day — of energy intake come from added sugars.

So how much sugar can be found in popular drinks?

A can of pop has 10 teaspoons of added sugar, a medium coke from McDonald's has 14, a medium double-double from Tim Hortons has seven and an Iced Capp has eight, according to Begg.

So, should you quit your daily habit? Begg said she thinks you could benefit by reducing your intake of sugary drinks. In particular, ditching your daily dose of pop would be an easy cut, she said.

"But cutting out a teaspoon in your tea or coffee in the morning isn't really a big deal," she said, adding it's OK to still enjoy baked goods in moderation.

The survey found adults aged under 40 consumed the most sugary beverages. The consumption of soda was twice as high for men, who also drink more sweetened fruit and sport drinks.

There was no difference in the rate of consumption of sweetened speciality coffees between the genders.

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Wildrose leader misses the mark

OPINION

Party isn't much different than it was under Smith

IN DEFENCE OF
Mike Morrison

I've always been a fan of the underdog, which is what made this past provincial election so fun for me. Both the Wildrose and NDP were labeled as underdogs, and yet both had huge victories.

After a successful campaign in May, WRP leader Brian Jean stood in front of his supporters and said: "The Wildrose Party is not about one person, it's not about Brian Jean, it's not about a single MLA, it's about all of Alberta."

I was kind of excited. Up until then, the Wildrose Party wasn't about all Albertans, it was about rural Alberta. So with a new leader came even more hope for the party that had basically resurrected itself in a matter of weeks.

Wildrose leader Brian Jean was a breath of fresh air when he took over the Wildrose Party, says Metro columnist Mike Morrison. But the party doesn't seem to be much different under his leadership. THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE

The timing couldn't have been better for Brian Jean. He's a seasoned politician and experienced lawyer. As leader of the official opposition, he should have been able to easily deflate the new NDP MLAs, some of whom were still enrolled in university.

But so far, Brian Jean and his band of loyalists don't seem much different than when they were led by Danielle Smith.

With Alberta's economy tanking, thousands losing their jobs, the Wildrose Party took time this past weekend at their annual general meting to set their sights on perhaps the biggest issue facing Albertans today: Student unions. Wait, what? Yup, this past weekend, the Wildrose Party passed a policy change that would make joining a post-secondary student union optional.

Is that a thing that anyone was even talking about?

And even if it was, why talk about that now? It's a policy so strange, they had to have known that the media was going to pick up on it. So instead of coming up with a clear plan to help Albertans dealing with $40 oil prices, the Wildrose Party is now fielding questions about student unions.

But really, it's not a surprise. Since May, the Wildrose Party seems to have lost its focus, perhaps in their efforts to appeal to more than rural Albertans. It sometimes feels like they're playing Policy Plinko and hoping that at some point they'll hit the jackpot. So far? No luck.

My biggest concern is that neither the NDP nor the Wildrose Party seem to have a plan if oil never recovers. Or even one to deal with the short-term issues. For the Wildrose, being contrarian to everything the NDP does or says isn't helpful, nor is it inspiring. Where's the innovation? Where's the creativity?

If the Wildrose Party really wants to represent all Albertans, they'll need to look to the cities, where citizens are looking for help with sinking oil prices, but are far less likely to want to deal with the social conservatism that the Wildrose Party is known for.

The leadership of the province is Brian Jean's for the taking. But without focus and real solutions, he's just not ready.

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Coun. Brian Pincott wants food producers who donate food that would otherwise go to the landfill to get a tax credit.
METRO FILE

An appetizing tax break

POVERTY

Incentive may divert wasted food to those most in need

Brodie Thomas
Metro | Calgary

Canadian businesses throw away tons of food every year, but there's a movement afoot to divert at least some of that food to those who need it most.

Coun. Brian Pincott will be bringing forth a motion to council on Monday asking the city to support a proposal that would give federal tax incentives to food producers and suppliers for donating unsold goods.

"It's unbelievable how much food goes to the landfill at a time when we're looking at poverty rates that are through the roof," said Pincott.

He's bringing forth the motion because he believes it could address a number of problems the city deals with, including waste diversion, food security and poverty.

"We need to prevent waste so we don't have to deal with it," he said. "Recycling and composting is really an interim step. The next step is to look at waste avoidance and waste elimination."

The tax break will have to come from the federal government, said Pincott, but he hopes the city will get behind it because it will save taxpayers' money in the long run.

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CONSERVATION

Albertans love the wilderness: Survey

A new survey suggests that Albertans strongly support preserving wilderness in the province even if they never visit it.

"The survey numbers came out really strong," said Katie Morrison with the southern Alberta chapter of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, which sponsored the poll.

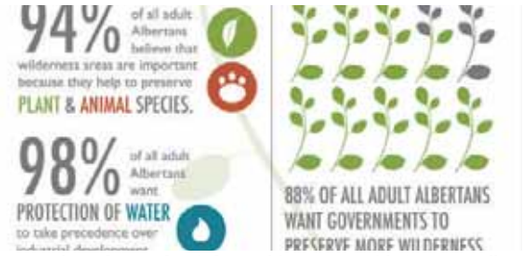
It found that 88 per cent of the 1,300 Albertans questioned last spring felt it was important to set aside more land where human activities are minimal. That level of support held even if no one were ever to visit or otherwise benefit from the land.

"There was just overwhelming support for conservation of wilderness areas," Morrison said.

Alberta is developing land-use plans for different regions of the province. Plans for the Lower Athabasca and South Saskatchewan regions have already been released.

> **This tells us that the values of the wider public need to be better incorporated into land-use decisions.**
> Katie Morrison

Morrison said the survey suggests that the process used to develop those plans is flawed. The government may be depending too much on local users, she said in a release. THE CANADIAN PRESS


94% of all adult Albertans believe that wilderness areas are important because they help to preserve PLANT & ANIMAL SPECIES.
98% of all adult Albertans want PROTECTION OF WATER to take precedence over
88% OF ALL ADULT ALBERTANS WANT GOVERNMENTS TO

Screenshot of part of an infographic put out with CPAWS poll results. CONTRIBUTED

CRIME

Calgary police charge one, seek two in man's murder
Calgary police have charged one man, but are still looking for two more suspects, in relation to the murder of David Quach, who was killed outside of a home in Monterey Park in late August.

Quach was shot outside of a home on the 7000 block of California Blvd NE on Aug. 22 around 9 p.m. and was transported to hospital where he later died as a result of his injuries.

On Aug. 26 police formally charged Said Raed Abdulbaki, 20, of Calgary with second-degree murder. Police don't believe the shooting was random and said a vehicle with two men believed to be directly involved in this incident was seen in the area at the time of the murder. The vehicle is described as a silver older-model compact car with a black driver's side door.

Crime Stoppers conducted a re-enactment of this crime Nov. 19 to encourage members of the public to come forward with information. METRO

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Lawson, a seven-year-old Townsend Tiger, takes a victory lap with Flames defenceman Kris Russell after beating the Flames 19-5. JENNIFER FRIESEN/FOR METRO

Flames fall to Townsend Tigers

CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

Team won 19-5 in the 35th wheelchair hockey game

Jennifer Friesen
For Metro

After rolling up to the net and circling around the side, Yasmeen pulled back her hockey stick and sent the puck right to the net, passing Calgary Flames centre Matt Stajan.

It was the final goal scored by the Townsend Tigers on Thursday, landing the team their 35th straight win against the Calgary Flames at the Alberta Children's Hospital's wheelchair hockey tournament.

The Flames lost by a score of 19-5, leaving the Tigers undefeated.

"It was fun, every year it's a great experience," said Calgary Flames defenceman Kris Russell, who took part in the tournament for the third time.

"It brings me back to when we were young, with all the excitement these kids bring. It's a different element, obviously, playing in a wheelchair, but some of these kids are pretty handy ... we lost to a good team."

Seven-year-old Lawson scored the multiple goals for the Tigers but said his last one was the best.

> **"One thing the Flames teached me today is to work as a team."**
> Lawson

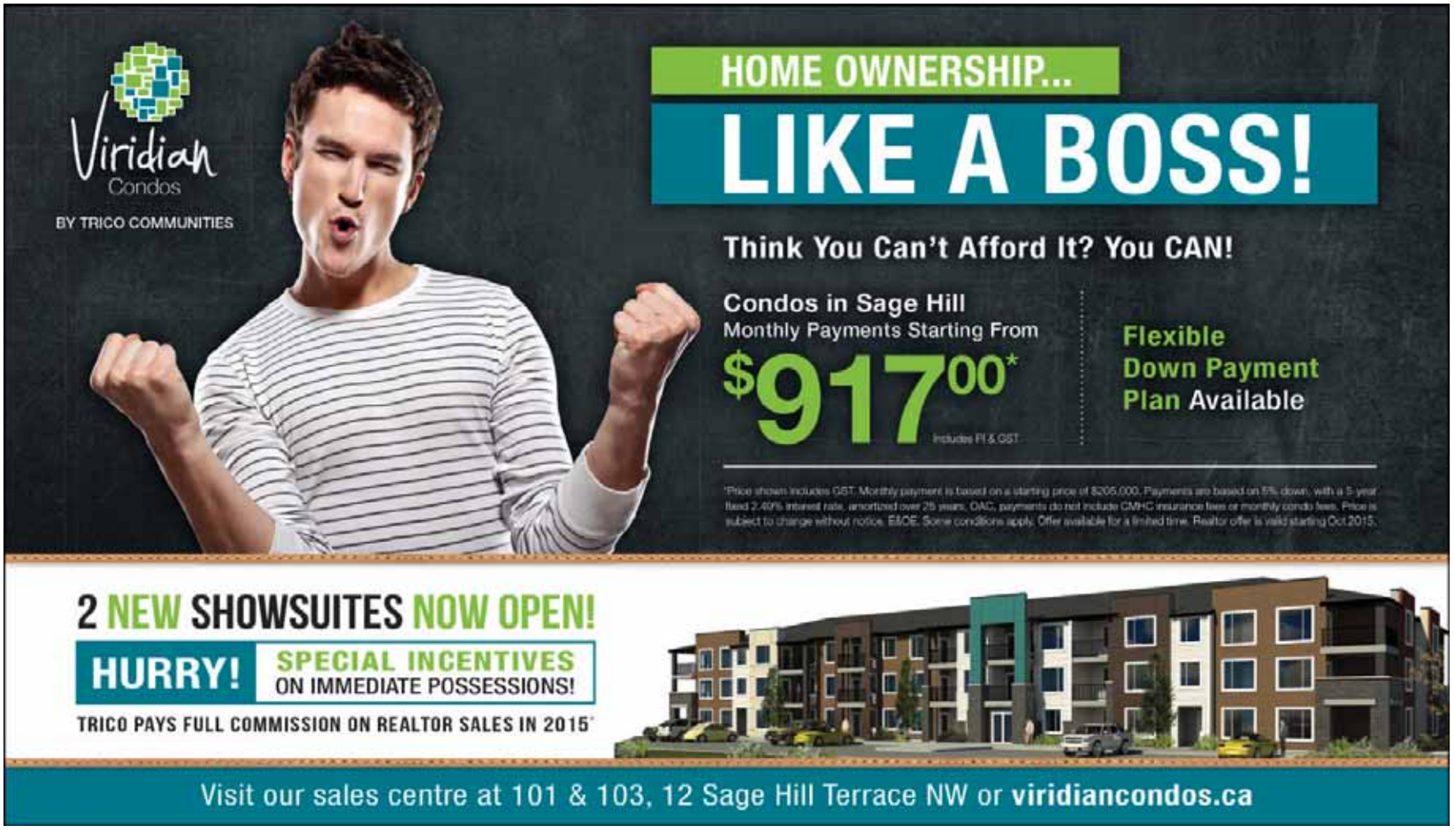
"I just liked playing with the Flames and having fun, because having fun is all that matters," said Lawson. "And one thing the Flames teached me today is to work as a team."

Lawson's mom, Megan Fackler, was cheering from the sidelines and said that he'd been practising all week and couldn't wait to get to the big game.

"It makes them feel special," she said. "Because they're big guys so it's neat for them to be playing with them and feel special in it all."

The Flames have been longstanding partners with the Alberta Children's Hospital. In 2010 the Flames Foundation for Life took part in launching the Rotary Flames House next door to the hospital, which provides 24-hour care to children and families with progressive, life-threatening illnesses.

"It's a situation where you can come and bring some excitement, but I think they do just as good a job as getting us excited about playing the game," said Russell. "I know the guys look forward to this every year, with this year included."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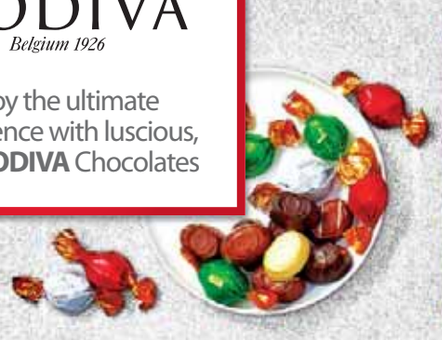

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New sitcom has a fresh take

DELMER AND MARTA

Show deals with 'real issues' using humour

Michelle Falk
For Metro | Edmonton

Delmer and Marta is not a sitcom about indigenous people.

Rather, it's just a show that will make you laugh, with indigenous characters.

Howie Miller — an internationally successful Edmonton-based comedian who identifies as Cree, from the Paul Band, west of Edmonton — said the aim of the new sitcom, set to air on APTN in the new year, is to be "more generic."

"There's also the side of us that's just like everybody else," he said, adding that not every show with indigenous content has to be about addressing "native plight."

Miller co-stars, as Marta, and co-produces and writes the series, along with other local celebrities including Sheldon Etler, who plays Delmer, and his son, Todd Houseman.

He said the family-friendly show is essentially making fun of indigenous stereotypes.

"I think the importance of it is to really open up Canada's eyes, the viewing public, to say, it's not all what you think it is, whatever your stereotype is," Miller said. "We're normal. We're funny."

> **My admiration or appreciation for women wearing bras is so high — but it's a great place to put my cellphone.**
> Howie Miller

Jesse Lipscombe, partner and executive producer with the Mosaic production company, who is helping to bring the show to life, compared the new sitcom to the Cosby Show in that way — "having a loving couple that happens to be aboriginal and happens to have come from the reserve, but that's not what the show is about."

The comedy deals with everyday issues. Miller developed the Marta character through his sketch comedy.

"My admiration or appreciation for women wearing bras is so high — but it's a great place to put my cellphone," he said.

Lipscombe said one of the things they pride themselves on is that they "deal with real issues" but they handle them with humour.

"What is neat about the show is that we have a mainstream family show that we have a transgender relationship. And the fact that it doesn't matter, matters so much," he said.

"Our main goal is to have 22 minutes per week where people can laugh and rejoice and just have fun," said Miller.

Local comedians Howie Miller and Sheldon Etler in their new sitcom Delmer and Marta. COURTESY ABORIGINAL PEOPLES TELEVISION NETWORK

CHARITY

Mom hopes to give 100 purses to women in need

Brodie Thomas
Metro | Calgary

This Christmas, 100 homeless women in Calgary will receive a gift courtesy of a local full-time mom and many volunteers.

Talley Roe is hoping to fill 100 used purses with items women might need, including scarves, socks, hygiene products and even jewellery, and distribute them to women in need.

She saw the idea online, and decided to put the call out to Calgarians.

"I just chose the number 100 because it seemed like a doable number — and it had a good ring to it," she said.

Roe is a social worker by trade who's currently raising her two children at home. She has worked with women in shelters before, and remembers talking to them about what they might want for Christmas.

She said the requests were always simple — things like toiletries, makeup and fashion accessories.

She put her request on Facebook, and then on the Calgary reddit page, and before she knew it she had over 100 purses — and offers keep coming in.

"I have about 12 emails I have to respond to," Roe said Thursday evening.

Her living room floor was completely covered in purses of all styles. She said some are more fashionable then others, but then again, people have different tastes.

Some purses have arrived empty, while others have items pre-packed. Some people and businesses are offering up items as well.

"Delta Hotels donated a bunch of bodywash and hair conditioner," she said. "A jeweler is going to donate 100 pieces of jewellery. People have been so creative."

Talley Roe is assembling 100 purses full of items for women in need to be given out at Christmas. BRODIE THOMAS/METRO

5 BARGAINS TO BE HAD FROM SERVICE ALBERTA AUCTIONS

The province occasionally has some great bargains in its online marketplace, launched in 2013. We've found five great items currently up for grabs and spruced up their descriptions. Visit surplus.gov.ab.ca to get into the action!

Brodie Thomas
Metro | Calgary

1 Ping-pong table

This is quite possibly the best deal on the site. This Sigma ping-pong table has a charcoal-grey finish, giving it a more modern look than the traditional green. Perfect for table tennis or beer pong. It will look great in your basement, until it gets buried in junk and laundry that nobody wants to fold.

2 A cabin

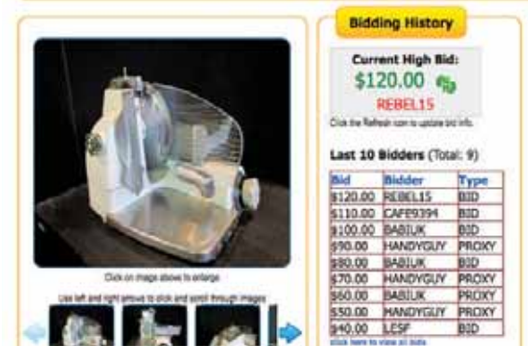
If you've given thought to selling all your possessions and moving to a cabin in the woods, this may be your chance. This quaint cabin (built in 1955) near Lac La Biche features faux wood panelling straight out of your grandparents' basement, a kitchenette and NO bathroom.

3 Pelvic bone model

Halloween is just 346 days away. You'll have the spookiest house on the block with this genuine pelvic bone model, which was used as a teaching aid. Visual condition is reported as good, while working condition is just "fair." You've been warned.

4 Luminometer

From the Greek word "lumen," meaning light, this Berthold Junior Luminometer will ... tell you how bright it is outside? We think. OK, we don't know what it does. But for $10, you'd probably be able to flip it to someone who does for a decent profit.



5 Berkel Meat Slicer

Did you ever go to buy some bologna at the store, but they had only the wimpy thin slices? You'll be able to cut bologna as thick as you want with your new-to-you Berkel Meat Slicer. Its stylish art deco design (because it's probably from the 1950s) means it'll make a great accent in any kitchen. Seller not liable for lost digits.

Auction offers the weird, wonderful

You may be a Kijiji warrior. You may eBay like it's nobody's business. But Albertans may not know of another online auction site with bargains to be had.

Since 2013, the province of Alberta has had its own online auction site to sell off surplus. The site is run by Service Alberta.

The site is easy to maneuver and breaks down the surplus by category. Whether you're looking for kitchen appliances, vehicles, land or even medical equipment, it's there on the site.

Cheryl Tkalcic, assistant director of communications for Service Alberta, said that in the first six months of 2015-16, more than 1,300 items were sold, bringing in $1,344,202.

They've sold fire trucks, an antique train caboose, 12 ambulances and six truckloads of kitchen appliances over the past two years.

And among the mundane, you may find one-of-a-kind items. Fancy an eight-foot-high statue of a cow driving a car, titled "Moov-Over?" How about a mounted brown trout taxidermy?

Service Alberta has found that by selling items online, it saves on the cost of transporting those items around the province.

There are rules, of course: surplus supplies are to be sold at not less than market or book value.

BRODIE THOMAS/METRO

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HUMAN RIGHTS

Strong support for transgender bill

Alberta has put forward legislation to prohibit discrimination based on gender identity and gender expression.

The changes are part of a bill introduced Thursday that, if passed, will become part of the Alberta Human Rights Act.

"No Albertan should be denied basic services for being true to themselves," Justice Minister Kathleen Ganley said.

"This change will increase access to justice and make it clear that discrimination on the basis of gender identity and expression is against the law."

Once the bill passes, Alberta will join Saskatchewan, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador, Ontario, Manitoba, and the Northwest Territories, which have similar bans in place.

Gender identity refers to a how a person views him or herself. Gender expression is the way people express their gender, such as through dress, demeanour and behaviour.

Ganley said consultation on the bill reinforced concerns that transgender Albertans face discrimination and threats to their well-being.

"(They) continue to be a highly marginalized group within society," said Ganley.

"I heard several stories of discrimination: difficulties finding a job, maintaining employment, or even being accepted into a workplace."

Aria Ehren, a transgender rights activist from Calgary, characterized it as a milestone day for the province. "I know I'm far from the only trans person in this province feeling a little more optimistic about the world today," said Ehren.

"There's an overwhelming feeling at times that our existence is an inconvenient fact that the world would rather not face." THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Femme Wave co-founders Hayley Muir and Kaely Cormack are asking attendees of the arts festival to donate feminine hygiene products. JENNIFER FRIESEN/METRO

End stigma with a wave

CHARITY

Festival looks to ease period pains during tampon drive

Lucie Edwardson
Metro | Calgary

Periods. Not something you usually begin a sentence with, but something that all women have to deal with each month, and that can become rather pricey.

Organizers of Femme Wave Calgary Feminist Arts Festival are trying to reduce some of the cost of feminine hygiene products for the Calgary YWCA by hosting a tampon drive during their festival.

"People will drop off clothing, food and whatever but they don't think of (tampons) as being something they need really," said Kaely Cormack, co-founder of Femme Wave. "It's something they go through like crazy and it costs them a lot of money."

Over the course of the 2015 festival, running Nov. 26-29, Femme Wave will be accepting donations of tampons and other feminine hygiene products at the door of every festival venue to support three YWCA housing programs; the YWCA Sheriff King Home emergency shelter, the YWCA Community-based Supportive housing program and the YWCA Mary Dover House Transitional housing program.

The YWCA said they are thankful for the show of support from Femme Wave.

"We are so grateful to groups like Femme Wave for their support; we can't do this much needed work alone" says Sue Tomney, YWCA CEO.

Cormack said people are encouraged to bring all kinds of feminine hygiene products, such as pads, tampons and diva cups.

"Everyone kind of has their brand," she said. "We hope that with the drive we will get a huge variety of products so people can pick what works best for them."

Cormack said she also hopes the drive reduces stigma around menstruation.

"It's neat that at a big show there will be a giant pile of tampons that people have to walk by and can't ignore or be afraid of," she said.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Jean says NDP not standing up to feds

Alberta's Opposition leader is accusing Premier Rachel Notley's New Democrats of letting Ottawa push the province around on its climate-change strategy.

Wildrose Leader Brian Jean noted in question period that federal Environment Minister Catherine McKenna is promising a new national target for greenhouse-gas reductions that will soon be set in consultation with the provinces.

"Why should Ottawa be allowed to interfere with how we run our industries?" Jean asked Notley.

"A Trudeau government interfering in Alberta's oilpatch — now where have I heard that story before?" added Jean, who was referring to former prime minister Pierre Trudeau's national energy program in the 1980s.

Other provinces seem to have more clout with Ottawa, suggested Jean, who noted that Montreal was allowed to dump raw sewage into the St. Lawrence River, but Alberta is pilloried for its environmental record.

"Why does the premier continue to stand by and let Alberta be pushed around by Ottawa?"

Notley hotly disagreed.

"We're doing our homework (by preparing a new climate-change strategy) after those folks over there stuck their head in the sand and tried to pretend there was no problem," Notley said of the Progressive Conservatives.

Alberta is days away from introducing changes to rules for reducing greenhouse-gas emissions. Notley has said the plan will be released before she heads to Paris for a climate-change summit. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Shima Safwat's event is designed to break down barriers in a fun, family-friendly way. AARON CHATHA/METRO CALGARY

Meet the neighbours

ONE NATION

Community day aims to bridge gap between Muslims, others

Aaron Chatha
Metro | Calgary

After the Paris attacks, some of community-builder Shima Safwat's team members told her to postpone her event, aimed at breaking down barriers between Muslims and non-Muslims.

"I said, no, it's the right time," explained Safwat. "We need to tell people we are human beings and you cannot judge the whole religion by one group of people. It's unfair."

Safwat had been planning the event for months. It began when she realized that although she regularly contributed to helping the community, her efforts were usually within the Muslim community in Calgary. She decided to take steps to reach out, make new friends and bridge the gap between Muslims and Calgarians from other backgrounds.

She said now it is more important than ever, not only to show non-Muslims that their culture is not represented by entities like ISIL, but also to help Muslims feel safer in the community. Safwat pointed to recent events, like a mosque attack or the assault of a Toronto Muslim women wearing a hijab.

"I have heard comment from Muslim ladies, they are scared to go out. They are scared. Believe me, if you feel scared, you will never be able to do anything. You will be stuck in your home with nothing to do."

> **"You cannot judge the whole religion by one group of people. It's unfair.**
> Shima Safwat

ACAD student Shahtaj Shahid felt attitudes were tense toward Muslims, especially online, but said overall she's come across more positive feedback than negative.

"Mostly everyone's attitude is very positive toward the Canadian Muslim community on the internet," she said. "Every once in a while though you'll find this really ignorant person who's, like, 'all Muslims are terrorists', and I'm just, like, 'you moron, go do your research.'"

Safwat hopes to make that research and education a part of her event, but promises there will be no lectures. It will be fun and family friendly, with free food, Henna tattoos, activities for children and the chance to learn about the hijab and niqab and what they represent.

"We are sharing the same love, we are facing the same challenges in Calgary, and we want a better future."

SAVE THE DATE

One Nation takes place Saturday, Nov. 28 at 11 a.m., at 11950 Country Village Link NE

LAWSUIT

Kent was a loose cannon: Lawyers

Lawyers for one of Canada's largest media companies are suggesting a former television reporter was a loose cannon with his "own agenda" when he ran for a seat in the Alberta legislature.

Arthur Kent's lawsuit against Postmedia, the National Post and columnist Don Martin alleges they defamed him when he was campaigning to win the Calgary Currie seat for the Progressive Conservatives in the 2008 provincial election.

A Martin column which ran during the campaign included details from unnamed sources that described Kent as a "lone ranger" who failed to toe the party line and was difficult to deal with. They said Kent was not co-operating with the party and that a number of key campaign members were threatening to quit.

The piece ran under the headline "Alberta's 'Scud Stud' a 'Dud' on Campaign Trail."

Kent was known as the "Scud Stud" from his days reporting on the Gulf War for NBC.

Lawyer Kristine Robidoux, who has since been identified as one of the sources Martin used, admitted under cross-examination Thursday that she was angry at Kent during the campaign and was considering quitting because he seemed to be at odds with the PC party and leader Ed Stelmach.

She noted they had a disagreement over whether Kent would appear at a public event with the other Calgary candidates and Stelmach.

"I don't think he liked I was being persistent. His response was to be curt to me," she said. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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WEEKEND EVENTS

Friday — The Paper Kites at The Gateway
Australia's Paper Kites have been together for only five years, but their intricately crafted indie folk has garnered them praise and fans around the world. Delicate instrumentation, wistful melodies and thoughtful lyrics made their debut album, States, a stand out. They're currently on tour in support of their upbeat sophomore release, twelve-four.

Saturday — The Mousetrap at Vertigo Theatre
Not only has The Mousetrap been produced more times than anyone can count, it's also the longest-running play in history, having premiered in London's West End in 1952.

There's a good reason for its success. Agatha Christie's murder-mystery is an entertaining whodunit with a twist ending that still surprises new audiences.

Saturday — CUFF.Docs at The Globe Cinema
The Calgary Underground Film Festival's popular documentary series returns with more entertaining and thought-provoking features. This year's selection includes Ingrid Bergman – In Her Own Words, a glimpse into the private life of the legendary actress, and Peggy Guggenheim: Art Addict about one of the leading figures in the modern art movement.

Sunday — Marda Loop Justice Film Festival
Another film event worth checking out is the Justice Film Festival, which is screening the best in humanitarian, environmental and social justice documentaries from around the world.

Highlights include the world premiere of Dream On, which examines the truth behind the 'American Dream.'

LISA WILTON/ METRO

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Shivani Thakkar is one of 10 local choreographers featured at this year's **Dance Montage**, taking place at the U of C's University Theatre until Saturday. IVAN KARABOBALIEV

Cut loose, Calgarians

SCENE YYC

Bollywood veteran brings a mélange of styles together

Lisa Wilton
For Metro | Calgary

Created in 1969, Dance Montage is one of the highlights of Calgary's arts calendar. The annual festival features the talents of several local choreographers as well as up-and-coming dancers in various dance genres.

Dance Montage 2015 runs until Saturday at the University Theatre in the University of Calgary. Established Bollywood choreographer Shivani Thakkar tells Metro why the event is important to her:

Q: How does Dance Montage differ from other choreography showcases? What is special about it?

A: Dance Montage is special because it's open to dancers of all levels in the Calgary community. It strives to represent a range of dance styles from Contemporary, Dance Theatre, Hip Hop, Latin Fusion, Bollywood, Ballet, Folk styles and more. It truly celebrates the joy of dance.

Q: Have you been involved with Dance Montage before? What have you learned from it?

A: This is my first year being involved with Dance Montage. It's been a fun experience putting together this piece for the cast of 18 Bollywood dancers. The challenging part as a choreographer has been addressing the various levels of dance experience in the room — our cast is mixed level. The most rewarding part of the experience is seeing the dancers growth over the past two months.

Q: Describe your particular piece for Dance Montage.

A: Due to my background in Indian classical, there is one segment that has a little bit of Indian classical technique and influence. The dance itself is a medley of four songs, with the overarching theme of a hero or king, who is our one male dancer, being delighted by the 17 female dancers that surround him. Half the girls are the sweet folky girls with flared skirts and flirty innocence, while the other half are the modern, sexy strong women in harem pants and halter tops that possess seduction, sass, and Masala spice.

Q: Why is dance such a popular art form?

A: It's a universal art from. Everyone understands, can relate to, and appreciate movement. Music touches our soul, whether we understand the lyrics or not, and when you pair movement to music, you have an art form that can be transcendental and transformative.

Tickets are available at the door, or call 403-210-7576 to reserve.

Cree Coffee Company bridges indigenous groups

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Calgarian Dylan Tootoosis proud to serve his people

Jeremy Simes
For Metro | Calgary

It was a no-brainer for Dylan Tootoosis to start his own coffee roasting business.

He said he remembers being 10 and sipping a cup-o-joe with his family around the kitchen table at Poundmaker Cree Nation.

But Tootoosis — who's proud to call himself a Calgarian since moving to the city in '85 — has been roasting coffee beans a little differently: all of his beans come from indigenous groups in South America, and are then distributed to First Nations reserves and sold at indigenous events like powwows.

His products have also made their way to some local grocers and businesses.

> **I wanted to do something on a nation-to-nation basis.**
> Dylan Tootoosis

As a result, he said naming his business Cree Coffee Company fit his mandate perfectly.

"Coffee is a part of our native people's culture," he said. "So, I wanted to do something on a nation-to-nation basis."

In Calgary, Tootoosis said he met an indigenous man from South America who's been sourcing fair-trade beans from the continent's indigenous groups.

After they talked for a bit, a partnership was born: Tootoosis buys the beans at a wholesale rate and then packages them for individual sales.

He said he wishes he could've started his business sooner — his past alcohol abuse had halted any progress he wanted to make.

"As soon as I became sober, my dream started to become a reality," said Tootoosis, who's been clean for one year.

"I have three kids and I have to support them," he added. "All of this is for them — I want them to have something in the future."

But his business is also a chance for him to give back to those in his community, he added.

"I felt like no other person was doing this," he said. "So it makes me feel proud and good that I'm actually serving my people something."

The Indian Business Corporation (IBC), an organization that finances businesses that are First Nations focused, has taken notice, according to IBC's loan manager Patrick Gladue.

"His product looks great," Gladue said.

The amount of funding Cree Coffee Company can expect from IBC has yet to be determined, but it will definitely receive something, Gladue added.

"I'm positive that his business is going to work."

Tootoosis's products are available in half-pound and one-pound bags, and come in light, smooth, medium and dark-roast flavours.

To order or learn more about the beans, search Cree Coffee Company on Facebook.

Dylan Tootoosis of Cree Coffee Company sources his beans from South America and distributes them among First Nations. CONTRIBUTED

SCIENCE

Ice Bucket Challenge fuels ALS research

Albertans who felt the big chill during last year's ALS Ice Bucket Challenge can give themselves a pat on the back.

It was announced Thursday that Dr. Sanjay Kalra — a neurologist and ALS specialist at the University of Alberta — had received a $2.94-million investment to explore new high-powered MRI techniques that could mean an earlier diagnosis of ALS, according to the ALS Society of Alberta.

The funds — which come from the Arthur J. Hudson Translational Team Grant — will let Kalra and researchers analyze the differences between people living with and without ALS via the new MRI methods.

Researchers hope the study will help them determine if there's a difference in imaging between those who live with and without ALS.

If successful, the study could improve the ability to diagnose the disease, creating a framework for doctors across the country to use.

"The Arthur J. Hudson Translational Grant encourages and enables researchers across Canada to work together to achieve the common goal of finding effective treatment faster for ALS," said Kalra in a news release.

"The grant program, sponsored by ALS Canada with leveraging funds from Brain Canada, has been made possible by the generous donations of Canadians through the Ice Bucket Challenge and the Walks for ALS."

During the Ice Bucket Challenge, Albertans raised $2.8 million for ALS Alberta; $2 million was invested in ALS Canada's national research program. METRO

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Brunch never tasted so good

Shannon Webber has been making this holiday brunch for the past 15 years. JENNIFER FRIESEN

TRADITION

Ham, cheese bring out taste of casserole

Jennifer Friesen

It was 15 years ago, bright and early on Christmas morning, when Shannon Webber started her family's longest-standing holiday tradition: brunch.

Affectionately known as "Yummy Brunch" in the Webber clan, it's a bit of a French toast casserole, but even better with added ham and cheese.

"The kids would be opening their stockings, and the whole house smelled so good," said Webber. "It's just a really great, golden buttery bread smell … it's nostalgic."

With three kids and a bevy of relatives to feed, "Yummy Brunch" was the perfect fit.

Mostly prepared the day before, Webber said it's the best way to feed family staying over for the holidays – especially when it means it lends the time to watch your children enjoy the day.

"When there's all this stuff going on, the last thing you want to do is to be slaving over a stove," she said. "With this, you can make it any time the day before, which is awesome, because all you have to do on the day-of is pop it in the oven."

Now, with all Webber's children out of the house, the whole family still comes home for the holidays to enjoy the meal – which she only ever makes at Christmas.

"Because then it really is something special for the kids," she said.

Webber said she thinks they will "carry on the tradition," making it for their own families as they grow into their own lives.

"It's always hard to get kids to sit down and eat on Christmas morning," she said.

"But they would – they would sit down and they would eat and they would really, really enjoy it. To me, that really says everything."

TIPS

1. "Take it out of the fridge and leave it on the counter for a half hour before putting it in the oven."
2. "Use ham from the deli. It doesn't take much, but it makes a difference when it isn't off the shelf and set to expire six months from now."
3. "You can definitely kick it up with jalapenos or pepper jack cheese if it's for adults or spicier tastes."

SHANNON WEBBER'S YUMMY BRUNCH

Ingredients

12 slices of French or Sourdough bread with crusts left on
6 slices of deli ham
1 small onion, chopped
6 slices of Swiss cheese
4 eggs
1 1/3 Cups milk
1/4 teaspoon dry mustard
4 tablespoons melted butter
1/3 Cup crushed Corn Flakes cereal
Salt and pepper, to taste

Directions

On the day before serving:
1. Grease a 9- by 13-inch glass baking dish. Arrange six slices of bread in the dish.
2. Top with ham, then cheese, then the remaining six slices of bread.
3. In a medium bowl, beat eggs, milk, salt, pepper, mustard and onion with a fork until smooth.
4. Pour the egg mixture over the dish. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight.

On the morning of:
1. Preheat oven to 350F.
2. Mix melted butter with crushed Corn Flakes until moist, and sprinkle over the bread.
3. Bake, uncovered, in the middle of oven for 45 minutes.

Serves six

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Duffy's friend takes stand

IN COURT

Contracts and payouts discussed at senator's trial

Gerald Donohue wasn't a professional speechwriter or researcher, didn't have any particular public policy background and wasn't the employee or officer of any company.

But over the span of three years, the longtime friend of Sen. Mike Duffy took in roughly $65,000 in taxpayer money for a variety of contracts, directing the money through a firm owned by his wife and son.

He also signed several cheques on behalf of the firm to other individuals and companies that Duffy wanted paid for Senate work — an intern, a makeup artist, speechwriters.

Donohue's testimony Thursday marked the winding down of the Crown's fraud, breach of trust and bribery case against Duffy. The senator has pleaded not guilty to all 31 counts.

The Crown alleges the $65,000 in contracts awarded to Donohue was used as a slush fund for Duffy to pay for services that wouldn't pass muster with the Senate.

By video link from his home in an Ottawa suburb, the witness answered prosecutor Mark Holmes' questions about his relationship with Duffy. The two met in the late 1980s at local Ottawa TV station CJOH — Donohue was a human resources manager, Duffy a host.

Over the years, the two men kept up a friendship of sorts. Donohue was a sounding board for Duffy, who would call to talk to him about a variety of issues.

After Duffy entered the Senate, Donohue said Duffy continued to pick his brain — this time for pay. He was asked to research the aging population, which he did on the Internet, or to come up with ideas for a speech on why Duffy was a Conservative.

Donohue conceded that he signed cheques to other Duffy service providers, even though he had no signing authority at the firm. He also revealed that those cheques were written off by the family companies, first called Maple Ridge Media and then Ottawa ICF.

Donohue said he got upset with the Senate administrators in 2012 when they refused to stop sending cheques to him personally, rather than to the firms.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

$65K

Amount of the contracts awarded to Sen. Mike Duffy's friend Gerald Donohue over three years.

Sen. Mike Duffy makes his way to the courthouse as his trial resumes in Ottawa on Thursday.
ADRIAN WYLD/THE CANADIAN PRESS

POLITICS

Tory MP denies he used slur

A Conservative MP from Saskatchewan says he denies calling a provincial NDP candidate a "whore."

A reporter from Moose Jaw posted a month-old video online Thursday that shows Tom Lukiwski urging his supporters to help Saskatchewan Party legislature member Greg Lawrence in April's provincial election.

Lukiwski is heard to say: "We've got to get Greg back elected. He's too important of an MLA to let go down to an NDP whore just because of a bad boundary."

A debate broke out on Twitter as to whether he said "whore" or "horde," meaning a large group or gang. Lukiwski said it was the latter.

"At no point did I use any sort of profanity to describe the NDP," he said in a statement. Lukiwski added he reached out to the NDP candidate, Karen Purdy, to assure her of that.

Purdy said she believes Lukiwski used "whore" and wants an apology.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

LEVIATHAN II

Body of missing whale-watcher recovered near Tofino, B.C.

The Leviathan II waits to be towed into Tofino, B.C., from near Vargas Island, B.C., in October. THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE

The body of an Australian man has been found off Vancouver Island's west coast, bringing to six the number of people who are confirmed dead after a whale-watching boat flipped on Oct. 25.

The BC Coroners Service said Thursday the body of 27-year-old Raveshan Morgan Pillay was recovered on the shore of Vargas Island, not far from Tofino, B.C.

Twenty-seven tourists and crew were tossed into the water, about 15 kilometres northwest of the tourist town, when a wave broadsided the Leviathan II, a 20-metre whale-watching boat.

The five people who were confirmed dead on the night of the incident were all from the United Kingdom and ranged in age from 18 to 76.

An extensive search for Pillay turned up nothing until surfers reported finding a body Wednesday night on a beach on Vargas Island, close to where the vessel flipped over.

Tofino Mayor Josie Osborne said Pillay's family travelled from Sydney to Tofino after the accident, but returned to Australia last week.

"(We're) just thinking a lot about his family and friends and the whole incident, and also mindful about all the people who were involved in the search for him," said Osborne on Thursday.

The Coroners Service, Transportation Safety Board and RCMP are continuing to investigate the incident.

Life-jackets were not required on the vessel and it appeared the tourists were not wearing them at the time, an initial coroner's investigation found.

Pillay's family told the community they had experienced "kindness after kindness" in a thank-you letter published in the local newspaper after their departure.

"Nobody is to blame. We lost our son, but we only lost his physical body. His spirit is here."

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FAITH

Hijab Day targets misconceptions

Members of Halifax's Muslim community are confronting misconceptions about their faith by holding an information session about the hijab this weekend.

Anyone who stops by the Halifax Central Library for Hijab Day on Saturday will be invited to try one on.

Abdelkader Tayebi, imam for the Ummah Mosque in Halifax, says he hopes the first-person experience will help people better understand those who wear the hijab, which covers the head and neck but not the face.

"It's no longer something that is related to a minority or a couple of people, so it has surfaced as a matter of concern to Canadians," he said. "It's being seen as something imported from outside, from the Middle East, whereas it is now a Canadian thing."

Tayebi says there are many mistaken ideas surrounding the hijab, including the notion that men are forcing women to wear them. THE CANADIAN PRESS

CELEBRITY

Trudeau making fans swoon abroad

Justin Trudeau was mobbed by a crowd of several hundred shrieking fans at the APEC summit in Manila, Philippines, in a scene more fitting a rock star than a political leader.

The celebrity appeal of Canada's new prime minister was on full display Thursday as men and women crowded around Trudeau, hoping for a glimpse, a handshake and a snippet of video on their phones.

"He so handsome," said one young fan. "He's like Superman," said another.

His appeal to local residents appeared to have little to do with his government policies or his famous father. Instead, it seemed they just like his looks.

"He makes us swoon," said Chin-Chin Domingo, who used the Tagalog word "kilig" to describe Trudeau's effects on the crowd. "It's butterflies in the stomach. That's how we feel."

Jono Lyn Cadayong was exuberant after getting a handshake from Trudeau. "I'm speechless. He has nice eyes. I will not wash my hand."

Squeals signalled Trudeau's arrival at a media briefing room where he held a news conference to conclude his day at the APEC summit. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Fans greet Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in Manila, Philippines on Thursday. SEAN KILPATRICK/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Syrian refugees gather outside their embassy waiting to apply for passports or to renew their old ones in Amman, Jordan, in September. Some of them may be among the 25,000 people resettled in Canada. RAAD ADAYLEH/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Government hunts for winter housing

REFUGEES

Notice seeks temporary sites for 500 to 3,000 people

The federal government is searching for temporary winter housing for thousands of people across Canada days before the expected unveiling of its plan to bring in 25,000 Syrian refugees by year's end.

Public Works and Government Services is establishing a list of facilities that can provide winterized housing at various sites across Canada.

The sites will have to accommodate between 500 and 3,000 people for as long as three months, according to a notice posted Thursday morning.

"The Government of Canada is seeking interested companies that have the capacity, capability and availability to provide leasing, management and servicing of temporary winterized lodgings for groups of 500-3,000 people by early December 2015 at sites to be confirmed," the notice reads.

It's not yet known if the request is specific to the needs of the expected refugees. The Public Works employee responsible for the notice refused to comment.

But the notice states the government requires lodging for both individuals and large families for up to three months, beginning next month. The timing and the requirements strongly suggest a temporary refuge for people fleeing Syria's bloody civil war.

The sites must be completely self-contained, including energy generation, sewer, and waste management, and provide space for an information centre and offices for management personnel, among other requirements. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

PREPARATION

Saskatchewan to set up settlement centre

Days after Saskatchewan Premier Brad Wall said Ottawa should suspend its plan to bring in 25,000 Syrian refugees, his province will establish a refugee settlement centre to co-ordinate the arrival of refugees.

The premier says it's important to ensure that refugees make a successful transition to life in Canada.

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TERRORISM

Female suicide bombers exist, too

The woman who blew herself up with an explosive vest in a suburban Paris apartment during a police operation Wednesday was far from the world's first female suicide bomber.

In the Palestinian territories, about a dozen women have carried out suicide attacks against Israelis since 2002 — including 27-year-old paramedic Wafa Idris, who blew herself up in downtown Jerusalem on Jan. 27, 2002. It was unclear if she planned to commit suicide.

Kurdish women have carried out several suicide attacks in Turkey since the 1980s, as have female members of leftist groups in their campaign against the government. The most recent attack occurred on Jan. 6, when a Turkish leftist group claimed responsibility for a suicide bombing at an Istanbul police station that killed an officer and wounded another.

Two female suicide bombers from Chechnya — belonging to a group known as the "black widows" in Russia — were to blame for the 2010 bombings of the Moscow metro, which killed some 40 people.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Iranian students fill in registration forms indicating their readiness to carry out suicide attacks.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

French gendarmes enforce the **Vigipirate plan**, France's national security alert system, throughout Paris. France revealed on Nov. 19 it will spend an extra 600 million euros ($641 million US) next year to ramp up security after the Paris attacks. President Francois Hollande announced this week that France is freezing plans to cut troop numbers through 2019. At the same time, the country will add 8,500 law enforcement jobs including 5,000 new police. AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Opera brings warmth to France's dark hour

Paris

Canada-based performers set for opening of Versailles show

Marco Chown Oved
IN PARIS

Barely 48 hours after the horrifying attacks in Paris, members of Toronto's Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra and Opera Atelier dance company faced a very difficult choice.

Their presentation of Jean-Baptiste Lully's 17th-century opera, Armide, was scheduled to go forward at the Chateau de Versailles just outside Paris, but the companies weren't going to force anyone to get on the plane.

Overcoming their fears, in a show of solidarity, and as a measure of their professionalism, every single one of the 75 musicians, dancers and technicians boarded that flight.

"When we started hearing the news, it was panic in the early hours, the borders are closed and a state of emergency. Everyone was concerned," said ballet dancer Jennifer Nichols.

> **"I think everyone, unanimously ... said we're doing this together**
> Ballet dancer Jennifer Nichols

"But once we heard that the company was moving forward with the tour ... we wanted to be in solidarity with the French people."

"There was a lot of trepidation," agreed Lucas Harris, who plays a type of lute called a theorbo. "But everyone else was going and we didn't want to let them down."

Harris and his wife, Geneviève Gilardeau, who plays violin in the orchestra, went one step further than most of their colleagues: they also brought their four-year-old daughter, Daphnée.

"All the extra security makes us a little uncomfortable," said Harris. But in the week of rehearsals since their arrival, they haven't regretted the choice.

The Toronto performers are now ready for opening night Friday, a performance that's being dedicated to the victims at the Bataclan concert hall.

INTELLIGENCE

Chemical weapons threaten the West

The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) group is aggressively pursuing development of chemical weapons, setting up a branch dedicated to research and experiments with the help of scientists from Iraq, Syria and elsewhere in the region, according to Iraqi and U.S. intelligence officials.

Their quest raises an alarming scenario for the West, given the determination to strike major cities that the group showed with its bloody attack last week in Paris. U.S. intelligence officials don't believe ISIL has the capability to develop sophisticated weapons like nerve gas that are most suited for a terrorist attack on a civilian target. So far the group has used mustard gas on the battlefield in Iraq and Syria.

Still, French Prime Minister Manuel Valls on Thursday warned that Islamic extremists might at some point use chemical or biological weapons.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

IN BRIEF

ISIL striving for reactions

ISIL has dramatically expanded its theatre of operations from its hub in Syria and Iraq, executing or inspiring a series of attacks across three continents that claimed more than 800 lives this year. The mayhem created by those attacks attracts the kind of attention that the extremist group thrives on. ISIL seeks to boost its credentials with acts of violence that attract recruits. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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U.S.-MEXICO BORDER

Eight Syrian refugees turn themselves in

Eight Syrian refugees turned themselves in to immigration authorities along the U.S.-Mexico border this week, officials said Thursday.

Their arrival and uncertainty about their future in the United States comes at a time of political upheaval over Syrian refugees following the deadly Paris attacks.

Two families — two men, two women and four children — presented themselves Tuesday at the port of entry of the west Texas city of Laredo, the Department of Homeland Security said in a release.

The men were taken to a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention centre in Pearsall, and the women and children to one in Dilley.

Republican Gov. Greg Abbott, who along with several other governors across the country recently ordered state officials to suspend entrance for Syrian refugees following last week's deadly attacks in Paris, tweeted a link Wednesday night to the conservative Breitbart News Network website, which reported that Syrians had been "caught" at the border.

"THIS is why Texas is vigilant about Syrian refugees," the governor wrote.

Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump followed suit Thursday with a tweet of his own: "ISIS, Maybe? I told you so. WE NEED A BIG & BEAUTIFUL WALL."

WE NEED A BIG & BEAUTIFUL WALL.
Tweet by presidential candidate Donald Trump

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Syrian President Bashar Assad CONTRIBUTED/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Saudis try to unite Syrian opposition

CIVIL WAR

Earlier summit failed to select groups to leave out of ceasefire

Saudi Arabia will host a conference in mid-December to try to unite the Syrian opposition ahead of new peace talks, a key issue in efforts to end the nearly five-year civil war, the country's UN ambassador said Thursday.

Saudi Ambassador Abdallah Al-Moualimi said his country will be trying to bring different strands of the opposition "together for a united voice."

Last Saturday, foreign ministers from about 20 nations agreed in Vienna to an ambitious yet incomplete plan that sets a Jan. 1 deadline for the start of negotiations between Syrian President Bashar Assad's government and opposition groups. Within six months, the negotiations are to establish a "credible, inclusive and non-sectarian" transitional government that would set a schedule for drafting a new constitution and holding a free and fair UN-supervised election within 18 months.

Neither the Syrian government nor opposition groups were present at the talks, which brought together the main foreign backers of both sides.

Staffan de Mistura, the UN special envoy for Syria who represented the UN at the Vienna talks, told reporters that a ceasefire in Syria is now more likely because the countries participating in talks in Vienna "have an interest in seeing a ceasefire taking place."

In Vienna, the foreign ministers failed to reach consensus on which groups — other than the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and al-Qaida affiliates — would not be eligible to be part of a ceasefire. Jordan was chosen to oversee a process that would identify which groups could be considered for identification as terrorists.

De Mistura said the Vienna participants want "as large as possible a ceasefire" and that the ministers agreed to disagree about a number of issues — including about the future of Assad.

Portraying himself as the only viable alternative to jihadi rule, Assad has labeled all his enemies "terrorists" — a designation that, in the wake of the recent attacks on civilians by ISIL, may find greater resonance.

Spanish Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Garcia-Margallo said cutting a deal with Assad would be the "lesser evil."

If we want peace, we have to find a way of getting along with Assad.
Spanish Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Garcia-Margallo

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Migrants wait to cross the **Greece-Macedonia border**, near the village of Idomeni. Countries along the migrant route through the Balkans have begun tightening restrictions on the waves of people crossing their borders by allowing entry only to those fleeing war.
SAKIS MITROLIDIS/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Balkan countries shut out refugees

BORDER CRISIS

Thousands of 'economic migrants' stuck between nations

Most nations along Europe's refugee corridor shut their borders Thursday to those not coming from war-torn countries such as Syria, Afghanistan or Iraq, leaving thousands of others seeking a better life in the continent stranded at Balkan border crossings.

The overnight decision triggered the domino effect that both asylum-seekers and European nations had feared given the record number of people fleeing to Europe this year, and new fears after the deadly Paris attacks of possible militants coming in with refugees.

Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia weren't allowing in the so-called economic migrants whose countries aren't shattered by armed struggles and wars.

In the Greek village of Idomeni at the border with Macedonia, police said the border has essentially been shut down to all since Thursday morning. Some 3,000 people are waiting at a camp nearby that provides temporary shelter for those heading north through the Balkans.

About 500 people from Iran, Morocco and Algeria gathered on the border line between Greece and Macedonia to protest the closure. As a result, nobody else from the nationalities that Macedonia is letting through — Syrians, Afghans and Iraqis — were able to cross.

Mohammed Mirzam, 30, from Afghanistan knows he will be let through, but his wife and two children, Ilia, 5, and Elena, 3, are Iranian nationals and will not.

"We're trapped," he said, from the Greek side of the border, at Idomeni. "They won't let my family across. We have no money, and we're waiting without any idea of what is to happen."

On the Serbian border with Macedonia, the Serbs were letting in only migrants from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq. And on the Croatia-Serbia border, Croats were only accepting people from those three countries plus Palestine.

"This is going to be definitely a challenging situation," U.N. refugee agency spokeswoman in Serbia Melita Sunjic said. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

> **We're trapped. They won't let my family across. We have no money, and we're waiting without any idea of what is to happen.**
> Mohammed Mirzam

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Bloc to discuss 2K Cuban migrants

CENTRAL AMERICA

Countries convene in El Salvador to quell tensions

A Central American regional bloc will take up the issue of some 2,000 Cuban migrants denied entry by Nicaragua on their way to the United States, Costa Rican authorities said Thursday, in a case that has ramped up diplomatic tensions between the two countries.

Foreign Ministers of Central American Integration System (SICA) nations are expected to meet Tuesday in the capital of El Salvador, where the bloc is headquartered, and will consider the issue as a humanitarian rather than a security concern, Costa Rican officials said.

"The countries have reacted in a positive and supportive way," Foreign Minister Manuel Gonzalez said. "They have understood that the humanitarian aspect is at stake and should be tackled, comprehensively, by the entire region."

Earlier in the day, Nicaragua accused Costa Rica of attempting to avoid discussion of the issue at SICA. Nicaraguan government spokeswoman Rosario Murillo, who is the wife of President Daniel Ortega, read a statement saying Costa Rica had tried to "systematically block" Nicaragua's request.

Nicaragua's foreign minister, Samuel Santos, said Costa Rica never warned his country more than 1,900 Cubans were about to show up at the border, where they have been stuck for several days. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A group of Cubans resting in a shelter in Costa Rica, near the border with Nicaragua. AFP/GETTY IMAGES

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The Power to Surprise

YEMEN

Shiite rebels free three U.S. captives

Three Americans held captive by Shiite rebels in Yemen's capital have been freed, Oman's state news agency and officials in Yemen said Thursday.

The short English-language statement on the Oman News Agency said only that the U.S. State Department had asked Oman to bring the Americans out of the country. It did not elaborate or provide information on their identities.

However, independent security officials in Yemen and members of the Shiite rebels known as Houthis said the Americans had been detained for at least two months at a Houthi security building in the rebel-held capital of Sanaa.

The rebels and the officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity as they weren't authorized to brief journalists, did not say why the Americans were held. Two of them were working with the United Nations, the officials said, while offering no information about the third.

The Houthis previously said they had detained two Americans on suspicion of being spies, but it wasn't immediately clear if those two were included in the release.

Some foreigners have been held in recent months by fighters involved in the country's ongoing civil war, either as political hostages or for ransom.

The Oman News Agency quoted an unnamed Foreign Ministry official in its report as saying: "The three U.S. citizens were transported from Sanaa to Muscat on board ... one of the Royal Air Force of Oman aircrafts, after which they will return to their country."

The U.S. Embassy in Muscat had no immediate comment.

On Nov. 10, U.S. officials announced detained American contractor John Hamen, who worked for a company managing U.N. facilities in Sanaa, had died there, without saying what killed him. Hamen and another American had arrived in Yemen from Djibouti on a U.N. aircraft on Oct. 20.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

5,700

At least 5,700 people have been killed in the conflict in Yemen since March 26, including 830 women and children, the UN said . The war has pushed the country to the brink of famine, as the UN says over 21 million people — 80 per cent of the population — need humanitarian aid.

IN BRIEF

China's president decries killing of hostage by ISIL

President Xi Jinping strongly condemned the killing of a Chinese hostage by Islamic State extremists.

ISIL said that it had killed two hostages it was holding for ransom from Norway and China. The Chinese man had been identified as Fan Jinghui, 50, who once taught grade school.

"Terrorists are the common enemy of humankind," Xi said. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Benghazi suspect in U.S. custody asks for release

Lawyers for a suspected Libyan militant charged in 2012 attacks that killed the U.S. Ambassador and three others have asked a judge to send him home.

The lawyers say the U.S. illegally captured and interrogated Ahmed Abu Khattala last year, and that the appropriate remedy for that is for him to be returned to Libya.

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Jared Fogle given 15 years in prison

GUILTY PLEA

Ex-Subway pitchman sentenced for sex with minors

Former Subway pitchman Jared Fogle was sentenced to more than 15 years in prison on Thursday for trading in child pornography and having sex with underage prostitutes, with the judge describing his "perversion and lawlessness" as "extreme."

In an Indianapolis, Ind. court, Judge Tanya Walton Pratt disregarded prosecutors' recommendation that Fogle get 12 1/2 years behind bars, opting for a stiffer term of 15 years and eight months in prison. She could have sentenced him to up to 50 years.

"The level of perversion and lawlessness exhibited by Mr. Fogle is extreme," Pratt said, who also ordered Fogle to submit to a lifetime of post-prison supervision and pay a $175,000 fine. She recommended that Fogle receive sex offender treatment in prison and said she'll recommend he serve his time at a federal lockup in Littleton, Colo., that specializes in such treatment.

Before he was sentenced, the 38-year-old father of two addressed the court, apologizing to his victims and his family and vowing to be a better person.

"I so regret that I let so many of you down," he told the court. "I want to redeem my life. I want to become a good, decent person. I want to rebuild my life," he said.

Fogle pleaded guilty to one count each of travelling to engage in illicit sexual conduct with a minor and distribution and receipt of child pornography, as per a deal he struck with prosecutors in August, a month after his suburban Indianapolis home was raided.

Fogle agreed to pay a total of $1.4 million to his 14 victims, with each getting $100,000.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Former Subway pitchman Jared Fogle at court Thursday. Fogle pleaded guilty on charges of trading child pornography and paying for sex with minors. MICHAEL CONROY/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

UNITED STATES

Northwest storms cause three deaths, outages

Over 100,000 customers remained without power in Washington state Thursday after a powerful storm killed three people and prompted an emergency declaration from the governor.

Gov. Jay Inslee declared a state of emergency Wednesday for all Washington counties, clearing the way for state officials to increase aid to those with storm damage.

Winds on Tuesday exceeded 160 km/h in some areas of the Inland Northwest.

Avista Corp. on Thursday was still trying to restore power to some 105,000 customers, most in Spokane County and northern Idaho.

Puget Sound Energy said about 100,000 customers were without power early Wednesday.

Wind gusts around 160 km/h rattled areas west and north of Denver, blowing snow from Tuesday's wintery storm across roads and knocking out power.

The storm dumped over a foot of snow in some parts of the Plains and winds created snow drifts several feet high.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ROMANIA

Inspection uncovers multiple fire hazards

Romanian firefighting authorities have uncovered thousands of fire safety violations in a range of buildings following a nightclub blaze last month in which at least 57 people died.

In a statement Thursday, the Inspectorate for Emergency Situations said it checked 1,000 bars, nightclubs, discotheques, cinemas and malls from Nov. 9 to Nov. 16. Many public places lacked firefighting equipment, fire permits or did not hold fire drills, the Inspectorate said. It also saw widespread violations of bans on using open flames, pyrotechnics and smoking in public places.

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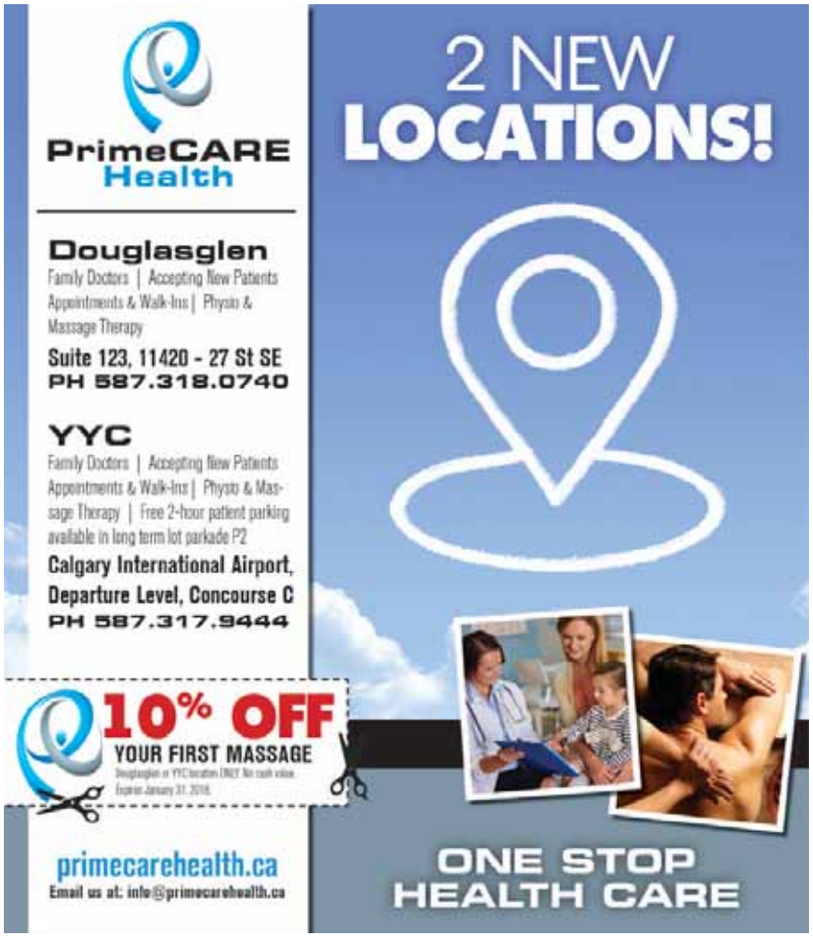
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Migrants going home to Mexico

IMMIGRATION

Now leaving U.S. in greater numbers than those arriving

Feliciano Bermejo agreed to voluntarily return to Mexico.
GREGORY BULL/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

There are many reasons for the historic reversal of migration between the U.S. and Mexico, according the Pew Research Center, which announced Thursday that more than 1 million Mexicans headed south to re-establish their lives in the last five years, while only 870,000 migrated north to the U.S.

Some have grown tired of living in the shadow of the law, and say border jumping has become too dangerous. Jobs are easier to find now in Mexico, and family ties are powerful.

Feliciano Bermejo spent 21 years north of the border, raising three sons who are U.S. citizens, before he was stopped in Atlanta for driving with a suspended licence.

He was reported to immigration authorities, and agreed to return to Mexico voluntarily, leaving his family behind, so his record would not be marred with a deportation.

The 49-year-old said he won't try to sneak into the U.S. The border has become too dangerous since he last crossed in 1994, and so he is building a life in Mexico.

When Rodrigo Quiroz got word his 79-year-old mother was dying, he rushed back to Mexico. He talked to her by phone on his way, but she died before he was able to catch another bus to his hometown of Culiacan.

"I never got to see her alive again," he said. "My mother's death really made me think. I want to be near my family. I don't want to go back to the United States anymore. There's work here, too."

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118 years to close pay gap: Report

WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM

Study ranked Canada as 30th out of 145 nations

Women around the world will earn less than men for the next 118 years if present trends in pay inequity persist, the World Economic Forum predicts.

The global pay gap between men and women closed by a mere 3 per cent over the past decade, noticeably stalling after 2009/2010, says the forum's annual Global Gender Gap report.

The slow progress means women are only now earning what men earned nearly a decade ago, $11,000 on average, the first year the Geneva-based non-profit foundation began tracking the data. Meanwhile, men's average pay has nearly doubled to $21,000 worldwide.

As the global economy becomes increasingly automated, "we need to create a world where women's contributions and ideals are as valued as those of men," said Klaus Schwab, founder and executive chairman of the forum, best known for its annual meeting of global leaders in Davos, Switzerland.

The report, which also looks at women's progress in education, health and political empowerment, found Canada ranked 30th out of the 145 nations surveyed.

Around the world, the Nordic nations remain the most gender-equal societies, led by Iceland, Norway and Finland, ranking first, second and third, the World Economic Forum said. The least equitable are Syria, Pakistan and Yemen, ranking 143rd, 144th and 145th respectively, the forum's report found.

One seemingly counter-intuitive ranking went to the African nation of Rwanda, which came in 6th. Much of it is due to the Rwanda genocide of 1994, which devastated the male population, leaving women to run the country.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE, WITH FILES FROM THE CANADIAN PRESS

ON BOARD

Largest one-year jump in female representation

Women hold 19.5 per cent of the seats on the boards of Canada's biggest companies, up from 17.1 per cent in 2014, says the Canadian Board Diversity Council. It's the largest one-year increase in female representation on the boards of FP500 companies since 2001. The rise follows introduction of a new "comply or explain" policy that forces publicly traded companies to disclose statistics on women on their boards. THE CANADIAN PRESS

NOW THAT'S SOME BLING SECOND-LARGEST DIAMOND FOUND Vancouver-based mining company Lucara Diamond Corp. says it has unearthed the second-largest gem quality diamond ever, and the largest discovered in over a century, at its Karowe Mine in Botswana. The 1,111-carat diamond, pictured above, measures 65 millimetres by 56 mm by 40 mm — a rock weighing half a pound that's a little smaller than a tennis ball. Only the Cullinan diamond, weighing 3,106 carats — close to 1½ pounds — and measuring over 10 centimetres in length, beats the diamond found by Lucara. COURTESY LUCARA DIAMOND CORP/THE CANADIAN PRESS

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FOREIGN POLICY

Trudeau makes his mark

Canada's new prime minister departed Thursday from the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in Manila, closing his first act on the international stage — trailed by a squealing mob of young Filipino journalists and volunteers and questions about whether any of it might be good for his broader foreign policy goals.

One of the things Justin Trudeau talked about a lot at this summit was the need to put Canada on the front lines of the fight against climate change.

Earlier in the day, that won him plaudits from U.S. President Barack Obama.

But Obama put the squeeze on Trudeau. The president said that the U.S. and Canada are "both soon to be signatories" to the Trans-Pacific Partnership. Trudeau has said he wants to consult with Canadians and Parliament before moving forward on the Pacific Rim trade pact. But Obama told this summit he wants countries to move swiftly towards ratification.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Justin Trudeau addresses a news conference in Manila, Thursday. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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ROOIBOS HARVEST

Drought in Africa hits red lattes, teas

From frothy red lattes to rust-coloured teas, popular rooibos drinks will likely become scarcer and more expensive because of a widespread drought in South Africa, including in scrubland where the rooibos plant normally flourishes.

A devastated rooibos harvest may lead to a 90 per cent price increase, a trade council said on Thursday. The U.S. is one of the biggest importers of rooibos tea. There was little rainfall during the July and August planting months which could cause the worst harvest in years, the South African Rooibos Council said in a statement.

Farmers will only know the extent of their losses in the first half of 2016 when the volume of the final harvest is known, said council spokesman Ernest du Toit.

South Africa is the only region where the rooibos plant grows naturally.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

metro VIEWS
Your essential daily news
Weekend, November 20-22, 2015

ROSEMARY WESTWOOD

You can't help but want a towering figure in feminism like Gloria Steinem to have the best chat of her life, chatting with you. But damn, are you lucky that she's chatting to you at all.

I think I screwed up with Gloria Steinem. She was great. She was (is) interesting, and thoughtful and kind. Also: At ease.

But I was trying far too hard. Maybe it was over-reading all things by and for her, or marking her new book My Life on the Road, using "sign here" stickies at my favourite parts, as if I'd have time to touch on them all, worrying how to ask questions she'd never heard before.

Of course, Steinem doesn't need any interviewer to be interesting.

I began by thanking her for her decades of activism.

"Well, you know, I feel the same thankfulness to all the people who woke me up," she said. "It's like a chain, and it just goes on and on, which is the good news."

Many of the people who "woke her up" are detailed in her memoir, a personal history of second-wave feminism from the vanguard, a meditation on the act of listening, a book rich with characters she meets on the road, in planes, taxis and trains, in India, the U.S. and Canada. They teach her and buoy her and offer her hope, and I asked if we all need to travel to get that feeling of optimism.

But she said the road can be a state of mind: "When you leave your house in the morning, just being open to accident makes a big difference. Take those moments in the elevator, when nobody's talking but everybody's thinking the same thing, or whatever the immediate spontaneous moment is, and going with it to see what happens."

GLORIA'S GLAMOUR It's impossible not to get star-struck around feminist leader Gloria Steinem, writes Rosemary Westwood of their wide-ranging conversation. GETTY IMAGES

You might, like Steinem, discover your garbage man is your best political adviser.

I told her I see schisms among feminists by race, and she pointed to how the media and some scholars put the social-justice movement into silos, when "What's missing is the understanding of organic connections. It's not possible in any practical way, much less idealistic way, to be a feminist without being anti-racist," she said. Women suffer from both categories, and "in an even deeper way you can't perpetuate race or caste, as in India, or class, without controlling reproduction."

But are we — young feminists — doing enough to listen to each other, and be broad-minded?

No one's all that great at it, she said with a little laugh.

"I think young women are by and large better at it than older ones, because they're more conscious of the connections, because they've grown up with more connections."

"Racism is a prison for white folks who are culturally deprived," she added. "You have to get mad on your own behalf: 'How dare this society tell me who my friends are and where I live?' I think you become a more trustworthy ally when you see your own enlightened self-interest in it."

What most concerns her right now, she said, is global violence against women: Infanticides that led to a planet with more men than women, underage pregnancy causing teenage death, sexualized violence and domestic violence.

And she argued that the issue of violence against women should play a central role in foreign policy, too.

If western governments want to separate moderate groups from extremists to find allies in Syria, "the most reliable way of deciding that is attitudes toward women. If we had taken that seriously, we would not have aided the mujahideen, who turned into the Taliban in Afghanistan, for instance."

The only politician advocating that strategy, she said, is Hillary Clinton. Steinem writes in her book that the U.S. wasn't ready to have a woman head of state in 2008 because we, and especially men, "feel regressed to childhood when we see powerful women."

And now?

"I'm not sure." Maybe Clinton's own time as secretary of state has helped, she said, but it will be a "very tough campaign."

At one point, Steinem painted an image of the future that answered my worries that things can't change: "If we raised one generation of children without violence and without shaming and labels and, you know, race, gender roles and so on, we don't know what might be possible."

When I hung up, my mind created an alternate interview: I laughed when she laughed, instead of being too nervous, pleasantness gave way to firecrackers. You can't help but want a towering figure in feminism like Steinem to have the best chat of her life, chatting with you. But damn, are you lucky that she's chatting to you at all.

It's not possible in any practical way, much less idealistic way, to be a feminist without being anti-racist.
Gloria Steinem

THE BIG THING: POLITICS & PERSONAL SPACE

He's the Prime Minister of PDA. But are Justin Trudeau's touchy-feely tendencies a weird habit or a successful strategy?

Trudeau gets up close and personal with the U.S. president, bear-hugs premiers and soundly smooches his wife without apparent hesitation. Not to mention his habit of snuggly selfies with members of the public. But does it work?

Many Canadians enjoy getting hugs, even if they're too shy to give them in public, said University of Victoria psychology professor Robert Gifford, an

expert on personal space. "I would hazard a guess that (Trudeau's body language) works with many people, and in general is a good strategy, whether intended as a strategy or not," Gifford said.

The distance we prefer between ourselves and others varies by culture: People in the Middle East or Latin America, for example, tend to get a bit cosier than Europeans or Americans.

Etiquette expert Debby Mayne recommends a personal bubble of 120 centimetres between strangers, while one group of psychologists looking at norms of personal space used a benchmark of 64 centimetres for everyday conversation. (Violating this could indicate an autism spectrum disorder or a specific type of brain damage — no sign that applies to Trudeau).

Outside of intimate relationships, a distance of less than 45 centimetres typically makes North Americans nervous, "cross-eyed" and instinctively want to move away, according to the anthropology text The Hidden Dimension.

So, yes, Trudeau's in-your-face style "goes against the classical Canadian behaviour pattern," Gifford said. But that's not necessarily a bad thing: "Maybe we all need to hug a bit more."

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JLaw is living up to the hype

CELEBRITY

Industry seeks next big thing, finds star with staying power

Richard Crouse
For Metro Canada

Jennifer Lawrence in a scene from Joy (left), by director David O. Russell, and Academy Award nominated Winter's Bone (right). HANDOUTS

Sometimes you just know.

In my line of work, hype and celebrity are occupational hazards. Every day my inbox is stuffed with news releases touting the Next! Big! Thing! You get numb to it after a while, but every now and again someone will come along you know is destined for something big.

Jennifer Lawrence wasn't a star the first time I met her but you could tell it would only be a matter of time until she was. It was 2010, years before she would win an Academy Award or be known internationally as Katniss Everdeen. She was a struggling newbie with just a handful of credits, but a great big buzz surrounding her performance in Winter's Bone. Her steely but vulnerable take on an Ozark girl who will do anything to keep her family together was garnering good reviews and the usual phrases like "breakout performance" were being thrown around, but this time it felt different. Real.

I was asked to host a question-and-answer period with her after a screening of the film at a theatre in Toronto, but first we planned a quick dinner with a publicist at a nearby hotel. I've eaten with a lot actors who order a piece of steamed fish, no butter, no oil and then, rather than actually put it in their mouth, simply move it around the plate until the waiter takes it away.

Not Jennifer Lawrence. She ordered a steak dinner with sides and ate it all while showing us a cell phone snap of her costume for the Girl with the Dragon Tattoo audition. As she chatted, laughed and enjoyed dinner, it was apparent what she wasn't. She wasn't precious or overwhelmed at being on the cusp of something big. She was doing something rare in this business — being herself and enjoying the ride. In other words the woman you now see photobombing Taylor Swift on red carpets or starring in this weekend's The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 2 is the real deal, someone completely at ease with herself in a business that doesn't usually allow for that.

Later, on the way to the theatre, she opted not to take the provided limo. Instead we walked down Bloor Street. It was on the chilly side, so she draped my suit jacket over her shoulders. Along the way her high heel caught in a crack in the pavement and snapped off. Rather than hobble down the street, she kicked off both shoes and walked barefoot the rest of the way, her broken designer shoes in hand.

At the theatre I don't remember what we talked about on stage. When I think back on the night I reflect on the sweet spot she was in, career-wise. She was about to become one of the youngest Oscar nominees ever for best actress in a leading role and yet there wasn't an ounce of pretension about her. Charisma? Yes. Talent? In spades.

I don't claim to have some sort of celebrity ESP, but that night I knew in my gut I had met a star, a feeling reaffirmed when I saw her carry the Hunger Games movies on her back and become a leading voice in the fight for pay equality for women in Hollywood.

Want to see a superstar? Watch the last scene of the Joy trailer. Shot on an iPhone as test footage it's a close-up of Lawrence's face as she fires off two shotgun rounds. "My name's Joy, by the way," she says. It's a simple image but a magnetic one. It's a movie star moment from the rare actor who commands our attention every time she's on screen. Sometimes you just know.

MOVIE RATINGS by Richard Crouse

The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 2	★★★★
Brooklyn	★★★★
The Night Before	★★★★
Man Up	★★

HOW RATING WORKS	
★★★★	SEE IT
★★★	WORTHWHILE
★★	UP TO YOU
★	SKIP IT

Bridging 13 years in adaptation

INTERVIEW

Chiwetel Ejiofor talks making a film American

Ned Ehrbar
Metro | Hollywood

For The Secret in Their Eyes, Chiwetel Ejiofor teams up with Nicole Kidman and Julia Roberts — and takes on a unique acting challenge: playing the same character during two distinct periods of his life 13 years apart.

And while a little gray in the temples helps, Ejiofor found some unique ways to distinguish the two versions of himself.

What was it about this character that interested you?
I liked the idea of dealing with this character in two different time periods, thereby being able to reflect and engage with the obsessional qualities that he has. I'm sure it's a part of his character anyway, but these circumstances that he's in kind of highlight his propensity to become obsessed. It becomes a very interesting story about this guy's psychology, the demons at play within him. I was really excited about exploring all of those things.

That gap between the two periods is interesting. Did you do any work for yourself as far as what his life was like in between?
Yeah, I mean, building a sort of background for him and what his life was — his romantic life and his professional life — and just sort of filling in the gaps of that was really helpful. But the main event for him is that there's like a sound that he can't get rid of. I thought of it as almost literal, almost kind of something a ringing sound that he could never escape. He has the knowledge that the only way he'll ever get past or get through it is by finding the guy who did the thing. So the main thing for him in that time is that he cannot break free of this obsession, this need.

If you're imagining an actual ringing in your ears, does that drive you crazy by the end of the shoot?
(laughs) Yeah, I mean if it were to really manifest. But you know, yeah, it's obviously metaphorical but there's definitely a sense of that with him. And that's why I think when he starts to confront the guy, it just takes on its own quality.

Julia Roberts, Nicole Kidman and Chiwetel Ejiofor star in Secret in Their Eyes. HANDOUT

Did you watch the original Argentinean film?
No, I didn't. I didn't see it beforehand. I've seen it since. I felt like it was going to be interesting to me to be able to take a look at it afterward. What I always suspected was that the films would be very different because an American version of an Argentinean film, I think, just sort of culturally comes from a different place and would therefore go down a totally different avenue. And I think that's true of the film, that they become kind of cousins in a way. They're not directly related. They follow some of the same narrative principles, but the characters exist in totally different universes.

Can you pinpoint a cultural difference between an American and Argentinean version of a story?
In a sense, in the Argentinean version, there's something quite delicate and tender in the center of it that is slightly different from the Americanized version of the film, which is quite muscular, you know? And has a slightly different feel to it. It's quite different. I think both things work, but I don't think they could be overlapped. I don't think you could make an American version of the film that could sustain that kind of tenderness.

This seems like the kind of adult drama people lament that don't get made anymore.
That was one of the good things about doing this — it seemed like the kind of film that you don't really see that much of anymore, and I miss these kinds of movies. (laughs) I was really happy to be engaged in something like this.

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1950S HOLLYWOOD

John Goodman on Trumbo

John Goodman teams up with Bryan Cranston and director Jay Roach for Trumbo, starring as Frank King, the inelegant B-movie mogul who kept Dalton Trumbo (Cranston) working after he was blacklisted from Hollywood in the 1950s. And Goodman doesn't think we've come that far since then.

In Trumbo, John Goodman plays movie mogul Frank King who keeps a blacklisted screenwriter working in 1950s Hollywood. HILARY BRONWYN GAYLE/BLEECKER STREET/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

How familiar were you with Dalton Trumbo's story?
When I became interested in acting, I was drawn to the people from the Group Theater in New York, and a lot of them went on to become very famous acting teachers but then a lot of them also joined the Communist party. So I knew about blacklisting from what had happened to them, and I knew about the Hollywood 10 — not in a lot of great detail. I'd admired Dalton Trumbo but, my God, I had no idea he was as prolific as he was.

How about your character, Frank King? Were you familiar with him and his brother?
No, I didn't know a thing about them. I found out what I could find out on the Internet. You know, these guys were the same kind of people that founded the motion picture studios in the first place. They were involved in the pinball business, saw a way to make a quick buck. They were just there to make money and nothing else.

It almost seems strange now how much people freaked out over Communism.
It doesn't seem strange to me at all, and it doesn't seem like we've learned our lessons very well. People are very good at manipulating fear for their own ends and for power. We have a lot of lobbyists doing it, we have a lot of politicians who are buying into it. And these days of social media, it's becoming tribal, almost — the group-shaming of people, beating up on people. It's very good at turning individuals into mobs — "this is what's right to think, this is what's correct." And people aren't afraid to use death threats now and really, really hateful speech. Doesn't seem like we've learned a lot.

It's scary how with social media you can create your own echo chamber.
Yeah, you listen to the groups that you want to listen to, and you don't listen to anybody else. That's as far as I want to get down that, start to get into privacy and all that stuff, which has no bearing here. Well ... it does because it's the privacy of a person to have their own beliefs and wishes and not have to share them with anyone else or really have to explain them if they're perfectly legal to have.

NED EHRBAR/METRO HOLLYWOOD

Now playing

DRAMA/ACTION

The Hunger Games - Mockingjay 2

Director: Francis Lawrence
Starring: Jennifer Lawrence, Julianne Moore

With the nation of Panem in a full-scale war, Katniss confronts President Snow in the final showdown. Teamed with a group of other fighters, Katniss goes off on a mission to liberate the citizens of Panem.

ROTTEN TOMATOES™ SCORE

Critics: 72% Audience: 99%

MYSTERY/SUSPENSE

Secret in their Eyes

Director: Billy Ray
Starring: Chiwetel Ejiofor, Julia Roberts

A tight-knit team of rising FBI investigators — Ray and Jess, along with their District Attorney supervisor Claire — is suddenly torn apart when they discover that Jess's teenage daughter has been brutally and inexplicably murdered.

ROTTEN TOMATOES™ SCORE

Critics: 35% Audience: 62%

COMEDY

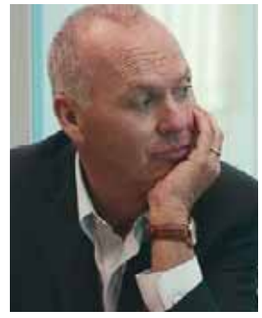
The Night Before

Director: Jonathan Levine
Starring: Joseph Gordon-Levitt, Seth Rogen

Ethan, Isaac, and Chris are friends. Their yearly Christmas Eve reunion has been an annual night of debauchery. But the tradition is coming to an end, and to make it memorable, they set out to find the Nutcracka Ball.

ROTTEN TOMATOES™ SCORE

Critics: 66% Audience: 96%



DRAMA

Spotlight

Director: Tom McCarthy
Starring: Mark Ruffalo, Michael Keaton

This film tells the riveting true story of the Pulitzer Prize-winning Boston Globe investigation that would rock the city and cause a crisis in one of the world's oldest and most trusted institutions. This tense thriller traces the steps to one of the biggest cover-ups in modern times.

ROTTEN TOMATOES™ SCORE

Critics: 96% Audience: 95%

COMEDY

Love The Coopers

Director: Jesse Nelson
Starring: Olivia Wilde, Amanda Seyfried

When four generations of the Cooper family come together for their annual Christmas Eve celebration, a series of unexpected visitors and unlikely events turn the night upside down, leading them all towards a surprising rediscovery of family bonds.

ROTTEN TOMATOES™ SCORE

Critics: 20% Audience: 44%

DRAMA/ROMANCE

By The Sea

Director: Angelina Jolie
Starring: Angelina Jolie, Brad Pitt

A married couple takes a vacation in France in the 1970s and finds that their time in a sleepy seaside town, complete with a unique array of locals, strengthens their bond and reaffirms their marriage.

ROTTEN TOMATOES™ SCORE

Critics: 30% Audience: 61%

THE HUFFINGTON POST Erin Whitney

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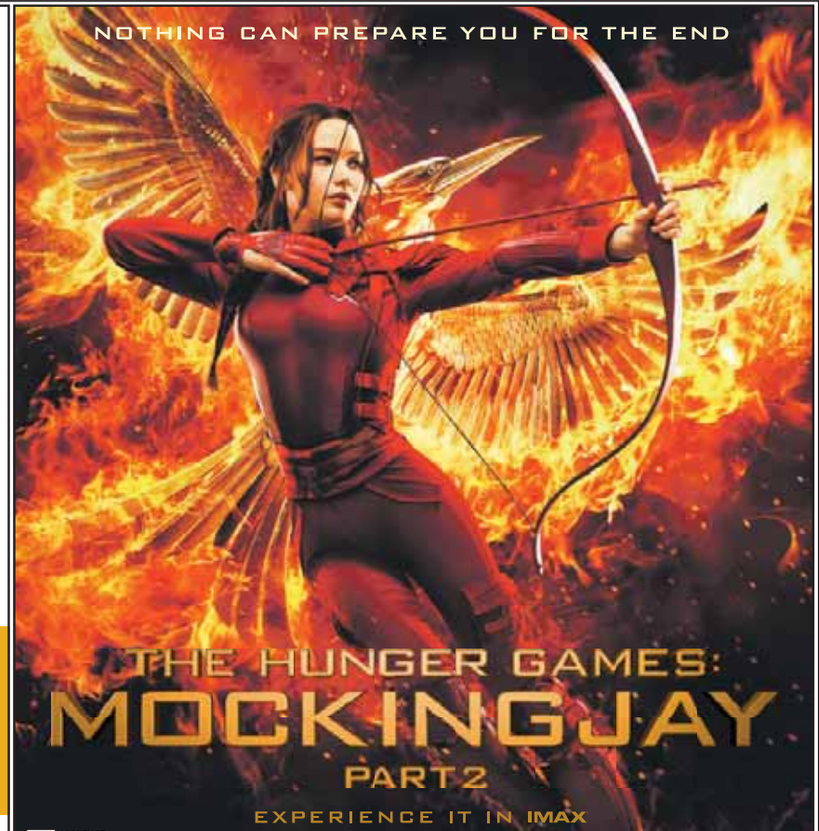

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Seth Rogen and Anthony Mackie feel too old for getting sloppy on Christmas Eve anymore, but Joseph Gordon-Levitt is still game in The Night Before. HANDOUT

When all your friends grow up

INTERVIEW

Jonathan Levine talks The Night Before

Matt Prigge
Metro | New York

The last time director Jonathan Levine made a movie with Joseph Gordon-Levitt and Seth Rogen, it was 50/50, a dramedy about cancer.

The Night Before is more lighthearted — sort of. It follows three friends (the other played by Anthony Mackie) doing their annual tradition of having a sloppy night in NYC on Christmas Eve. But this time the characters played by Rogen and Mackie feel they're too old and settled down to ever do it again, leaving Gordon-Levitt as the last hold-out. It's that anxiety that made Levine — who also made The Wackness and Warm Bodies — comfortable doing his first full-on comedy.

This is your second film with Seth Rogen, after 50/50. How did you two first meet?

On 50/50, there was another filmmaker who dropped out a couple months before. I was one of five people up for the gig. For whatever reason they liked me. I think it was because I made The Wackness and they thought I would smoke weed with them. (Laughs) But it was also because I spoke relatively intelligently about the material.

I've read you two have helped each other out on projects — that he helped look at Warm Bodies and you looked at This is the End.

Yeah, but it wasn't in any specific way. Seth and Evan continuously have people come in and look at their stuff. If I'm looking at This is the End, I'm one of 50 people who are looking at it. On Warm Bodies I definitely used that. The first time was on 50/50, where we thought we needed to have smart people look at it and tell us what's good and what's bad. Seth was one of those people. It's a culture of rigorous note-giving and improving the work.

> **I imagined it as a Christmas movie for people who didn't celebrate traditional Christmases.**
> Director Jonathan Levine

You've done dramas or romances that were funny before, but you've never really made a full-on comedy.

It was a change of pace. And it certainly wouldn't have worked for me if at its heart there wasn't an undercurrent of drama. Having it fundamentally revolve around issues of friendship and getting older, that me more comfortable executing the comedy. I loved doing something whose primary goal was to make people laugh. You feel like you're throwing a party and your only goal is to make everyone has as much fun as possible.

Your sets sound very loose. You're not like Sam Peckinpah, drunkenly screaming at people.

No one screams at anybody. Well, I probably screamed on occasion. But generally everyone can bring their friend, everyone can brings their mom, everyone's welcome. When there's a very serious scene, of course it's not like that. It's very subdued. But if you were to see it, it would look like we're having fun.

Despite all the crazy things that happen in the film, it is rooted in a serious concern. Joseph Gordon-Levitt's Ethan hasn't gotten his stuff together, while his closest friends have, causing a disconnect.

When we were writing it, every single person had someone in mind who was that person in their life. We talked about why that person was not succeeding. There were many reasons. For a lot of us, the reason we've succeeded is talent, but also a lot of luck, so it's s—y to look at the friend who hasn't been so lucky. But the truth is a lot of it is luck. We settled on giving (Ethan) a trauma he's never been able to move past. That happens to a lot of people, whether it's someone who got stuck in a job for too long and looked up one day and his friends were more successful than him or her, or someone just got knocked down and took too long getting back up.

How conscious were you of playing with holiday movie conventions?

I imagined it as a Christmas movie for people who didn't celebrate traditional Christmases, whether because you're Jewish or from another non-Christian religion or your parents are divorced or you hate your parents.

There are lot of people who feel left out of the traditional Christmas. I would go out in New York do stuff like this on Christmas Eve. There were a lot of Christian people, there were a lot of Jews. It was all people who had a reason for not celebrating the traditional Christmas. It's nice because Christmas is an oppressive, monolithic thing.

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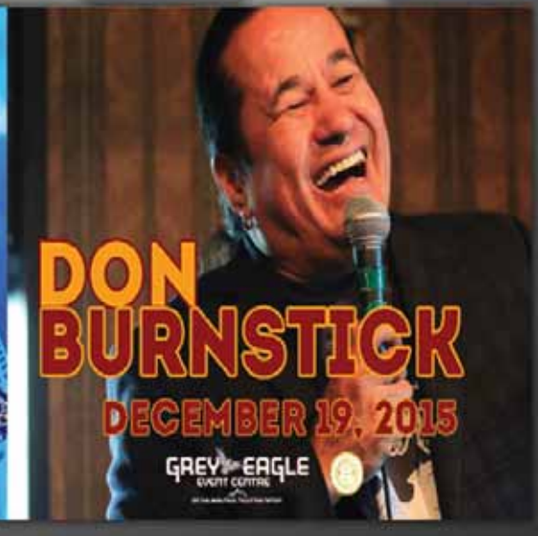

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Rocky returns for a new generation

CREED

How a director convinced Stallone to revisit franchise

Richard Crouse
For Metro Canada

Like a lot of people director Ryan Coogler has a personal connection to the Rocky movies.

"Whenever I had a big test at school or a football game (my father would) say, 'Take 10 minutes and watch this scene from Rocky. That'll get you fired up. That'll give you the juice to score five touchdowns. Or get an A on that test.' I'd look over and think, 'Are we watching this for me or for you?'"

It's one thing to have the emotional connection; it's another to convince Sylvester Stallone to make a seventh Rocky movie.

"I think the most important thing was that this movie was following a different character's arc," said Coogler.

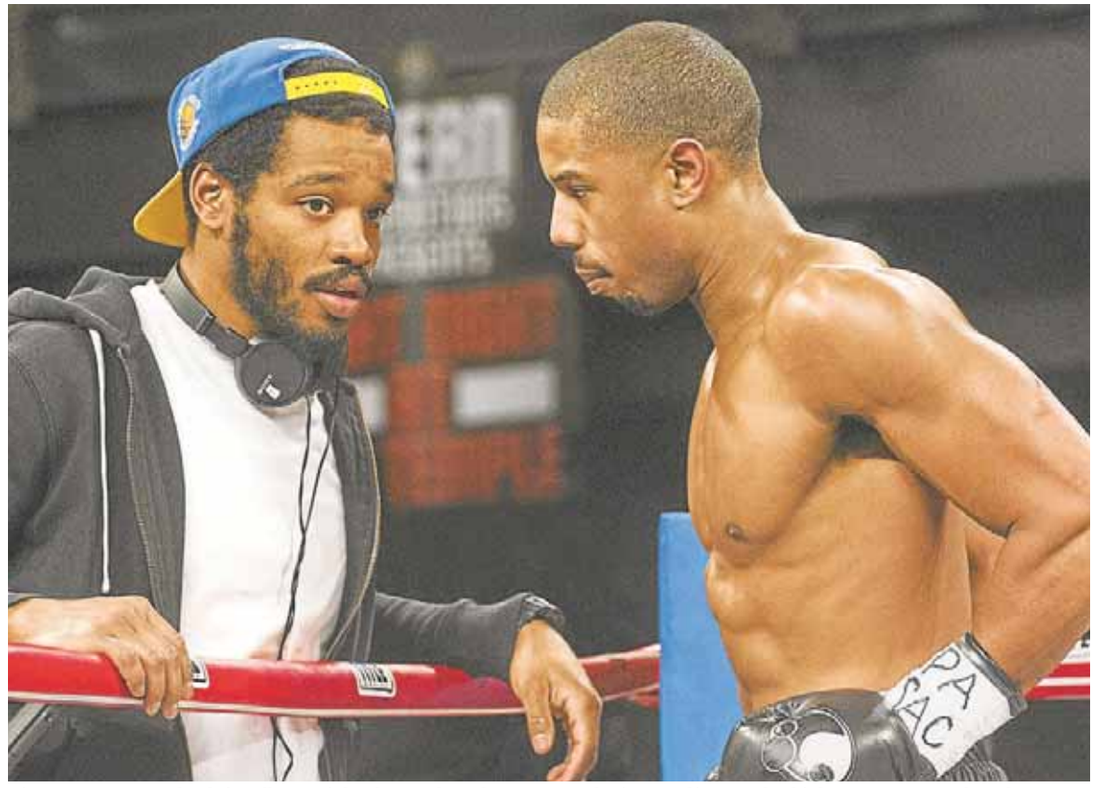
"Rocky is there in a role that's very important to the film but very much supports this other character's journey to find themselves. That was important because no matter how good the idea was he wasn't going to make another Rocky movie."

The result is Creed, the evolution of a story that began in 1976, 10 years before Coogler was born. Michael B. Jordan is Adonis Creed, the son of Apollo Creed, Rocky's old friend who died in the ring at the hands of Ivan Drago.

Born after his father's death, Adonis never knew his dad but seems to have inherited the old man's love of boxing and much of his skill, but can Rocky whip him into shape for a title match? Cue the underdog theatrics and signature swelling trumpet score.

"Creed is about a sense of identity," said Coogler, "which is what I think the first Rocky was but the other themes are what make this fresh. What happens to someone dealing with an absentee father? What does love look like in the millennial generation when women are just as career oriented as men, or are expected to be? This idea of a generational handoff, baby boomers handing off responsibility and jobs to millennials; what does that look like?"

It looks like Rocky 1.0, a new story for a new generation. "I was always honest with (Stallone) and let him know what the movies meant to me. I think he has an understanding that the movies kind of belong to everybody at this point."



Director Ryan Coogler, left, talks to Michael B. Jordan who stars as Adonis Creed in Creed, which opens next Wednesday. Jordan says he's always looked at himself as an underdog and had to defeat odds to get what he wanted. HANDOUT

> **Creed is about a sense of identity... a generational handoff, baby boomers handing off responsiblity and jobs to millenials.** Director Ryan Coogler

STAR NOTES

Michael B. Jordan's love affair with Rocky

"The things that came to mind (while watching the Rocky films was) inspiration. Then this project came up and I had the chance to fall in love with the Rocky franchise all over again."

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Saoirse steps into role she's lived

PERIOD DRAMA

Coming-of age part plays into her own growth, says Brooklyn star

Steve Gow
For Metro Canada

> What's particularly fresh about this story is that it's told from a woman's point of view ... something that's missing from all of the accounts in the Irish canon of immigration.
> Director John Crowley

Saoirse Ronan plays an Irish immigrant in 1950s New York in Brooklyn, adapted from Colm Tóibín's bestselling novel. CONTRIBUTED

Hollywood has never been an easy place to carve out a career — especially for child actors growing up in front of the camera. So it's particularly remarkable how smoothly Saoirse Ronan has maneuvered the maelstrom of the movie biz since entering it at just nine years old.

"I never played kid roles and I had never been in kid films so I always just thought of myself as an actor," reasoned the now 21-year-old actress whose acclaimed oeuvre includes The Lovely Bones and The Grand Budapest Hotel. "But until now, it was tricky to showcase that you were ready to move on to that next step of taking on roles that were a little bit more mature and where you're more at, personally."

That's why her latest offering, Brooklyn, was such an important role for the Irish-American actor. Based on Colm Tóibín's award-winning best-seller (which U.K. newspaper The Guardian named as "one of the ten best historical novels"), the 1950s-set drama follows the story of an Irish immigrant who flees to New York in search of work and must struggle with new loves and a life on her own as a young adult.

"What's particularly fresh about this story is that it's told from a woman's point of view and that's something that's missing from all of the accounts in the Irish canon of immigration," explained director John Crowley. "If you got that specific story right, then you'd have the scale to carry hundreds, thousands and millions of stories with it. It's sort of a keyhole drama in that way."

While that period of history remains scarce on testimony, Ronan insists she didn't necessarily rely on research to assume the character. Instead the acting approach that garnered Ronan an Oscar nomination in 2008 for Atonement has "very much stayed based on instinct" — something that also informed her latest coming-of-age portrayal.

"As you get older and you have more life experience, that does come into play when you play a character," admitted Ronan. "This was less of a journey to step into that place because I was already there."

THREE THINGS

Ronan as chameleon
The first time I interviewed Saoirse Ronan she was 15 years old and the veteran of six movies. I had always admired her performances and as I walked into the interview suite I congratulated her on the film.

"T'anks pure much," she said with an Irish lilt that could charm the label off a bottle of Jameson Whiskey.

It was the first time I had heard her natural accent and confirmed what I already knew: that she was a chameleon with a propensity for accents that could give Meryl Streep a run for her money.

This weekend in Brooklyn she drops the drawls to play an Irish girl who immigrates to New York in the 1950s.

In what part of Ireland was she born? Despite her Irish accent, she was actually born in the Bronx in 1994.

"(My parents) went to New York in the '80s. There was a really bad recession in Ireland at the time. A lot of young people went to New York because that's our trek, that's our journey. The Irish always go to New York or somewhere on the East Coast."

Monica Ronan and Paul Ronan lived in New York for 11 years in total, moving back to County Carlow, Ireland when Saoirse was three years old.

Can she beat me up? Probably. To play teenage assassin Hanna she studied knife fighting, stick fighting, martial arts and learned how to shoot a gun. She performed most of her own stunts in the film and says if she was ever offered the action-star role of James Bond she would happily accept. "That tux? I could totally rock it." RICHARD CROUSE/METRO

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THE TV DINNER JESSICA ALLEN

To spoon or not to spoon? Those born in Italy were adamant that it's frowned upon.

I was confused after I watched Brooklyn during TIFF. It wasn't the plot — a young Irish woman, Ellis (Saoirse Ronan), must not only choose between her homeland (Ireland) and the country to which she recently immigrated (America) but also between two young men who inhabit those disparate worlds separated by the Atlantic. I think it was purely a case of disbelief: Did I just sit through an entire contemporary film without spotting a single superhero? Without any overt violence, villains, sex and scandal? Was this simply a tender movie, rich with '50s period detail, about the isolation of the immigrant experience; about love, loss and growing up?

Yes, it was. And I expected the critics would hate the film, which hits theatres Friday, for being overly sentimental. But they are nearly unanimously enchanted. It's a "gorgeous movie about love and the idea that you can't go home," said Indiewire, who also suggests that Ronan is "a sure bet for a best actress nomination."

With a single glance, the 21-year-old actress can so convincingly convey what homesickness looks and feels like that I ached to call my parents. I also became so invested in the difficult decisions her character has to make that my heart raced as though I was watching a thriller.

There was one decision, however, that I questioned. Ellis' den mother, played by the illimitable Julie Walters, helps her practise eating spaghetti, a delicacy that's she's never tried, to prepare Ellis for dinner with the family of her Italian-American boyfriend, Tony.

THE MOVIE: Brooklyn

THE MEAL: Spaghetti and meatballs

Ellis knocks their socks off, as she deftly uses her spoon to twirl the noodles around her forks' tines — just like they do.

Now, there will be two responses to the above observation: Some of you won't bat an eyelash while others will be incredulous: no respecting Italian past the age of five uses a spoon to eat spaghetti.

To spoon or not to spoon? That is the question I posed to friends. Those born in Italy were adamant that it's frowned upon. Plus, they said, you will never be given a spoon for a pasta course at a restaurant in their motherland. Others — including mangiacakes, like me, and second or third generation Italian-Canadians — spoon away. One friend told me that her parents, second generation Italians, used the spoons for noodle-twirling — that is until they travelled back to their tiny home village in Calabria, where spoons were for soup, not spaghetti.

Could it be that when Italians immigrated to North America, not only their food metamorphosed, gracing us with dishes like pepperoni pizza, penne alla vodka and chicken parmigiana, but also their table etiquette did, too?

After getting lost in culinary history — the invention, popularization and industrialization of pasta — I can't be certain. But Miss Manners has a strong opinion on the matter: "In the civilized world, which includes the United States and Italy," she wrote in 2005, "it is incorrect to eat spaghetti with a spoon."

No matter, because all my research made me hungry for what could arguably be Italian Americans' greatest contribution to modern civilization: spaghetti and meatballs. (In Italy, meatballs, or polpette, are served on their own, not in "Sunday gravy.") So, after whipping some up, we devoured huge bowls of it while watching The Godfather II, obviously. No spoons were required.

Jessica Allen is the digital correspondent on CTV's The Social.

FILM BRIEF

Stalled Freddie Mercury biopic may yet rock us

A long-gestating Hollywood biopic of Queen singer Freddie Mercury may have a new chance at hitting the screen, with a new screenwriter hired to work on the project.

Sacha Baron Cohen had initially been slated to play the singer but dropped out in 2013, and a year later, the film lost its director.

Now, Deadline reports that the Oscar-nominated scribe behind The Theory of Everything, Anthony McCarten, is taking a crack at the screenplay.

Once the screenplay is written, studio Sony will read the script and have the possibility of opting in. AFP

Freddy Mercury
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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STRONG LOOKS BETTER NAKED

Khloe juggles book and drama

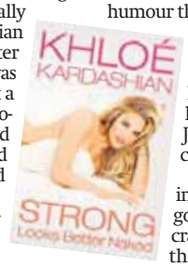
The awkwardness of Khloe Kardashian promoting a book while she's helping estranged husband Lamar Odom recover from a suspected overdose is not lost on the reality star.

"It is very weird to be selling something or telling everybody 'go buy my book' when there's very serious things happening in my life," Kardashian said in an interview with The Associated Press last week. "Real life happens and nothing is going to stop. Your work can't just stop. So we have to learn to juggle it all and still make time for yourself."

The book, Strong Looks Better Naked, is a self-help manual that chronicles her weight loss and her rebound after her marriage to Odom collapsed and left her reeling.

"Everything in the book I am living day by day right now," she said.

Even though they went through divorce proceedings, they are still technically married, and Kardashian rushed to his side after the former NBA star was found unconscious at a Nevada brothel in October. Odom is believed to have overdosed on cocaine and other drugs.



While Kardashian is still very involved in his recovery. She said he's still healing, a process she describes as "day by day."

"Every day like I say 'I'm doing press for the book.' And he'll just look like, 'What? What are you talking about?' And I'll remind him again. So it's constantly reminding him, but that's what we do every day until he gets better. And you know the brain is magical," she said. "It's gonna heal in time."

Kardashian, who also launches a talk show called Kocktails with Khloe Jan. 20 on the FYI network, has kept her sense of humour through all the drama.

She jokes about being a "polygamist" since she has maintained her relationship with her boyfriend, NBA's James Harden, while caring for Odom.

"It's a very interesting dynamic that I have going on. It is also just crazy at the same time that I have to explain everything that I do and the choices I'm making when I know the choices I'm making, my boyfriend knows the choices, my family knows the choices," she said. "You just have to like kind of laugh at everything because if you don't laugh you're gonna cry. So the answer is start laughing."

She said communication is the key to her relationship with Harden. "If you make someone feel comfortable I think any situation you can work through. But I still respect how he feels and what his boundaries are," she said. "I'm sure it's confusing, but we know we're not confused."

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Bill Nye 'the science can save us' guy

Bill Nye's new book Unstoppable: Harnessing Science to Change the World is out this week.
CONTRIBUTED

NEW BOOK

TV star is convinced we can tackle climate change

Bill Nye is discussing his new book on climate change from an apt location: behind the wheel of a Tesla.

While electrically navigating the streets of New York City, Nye offers a supercharged warning about the dangers ahead if the problem isn't tackled, and now.

Science has conclusively demonstrated a link between human activity and an overheated Earth, he says, dismissing the counter-arguments of doubters and deniers as "weird."

And it's with scientific innovation that we can rescue our home planet and ourselves, says Nye, who offers a detailed and chatty how-to in Unstoppable: Harnessing Science to Change the World, out this week from St. Martin's Press.

Unstoppable, which opens with a stern warning that climate change "is coming right at you," moves quickly to his advice to stop worrying — "or at least to move past it" — and get busy.

Nye has his work cut out for him: An Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research poll in October found two out of three Americans accept global warming, with the vast majority of those citing human activities as at least part of the cause. But fewer than one in four Americans are extremely or very worried about it.

The bow-tie bedecked engineer, who gained fame on the 1990s TV series Bill Nye, the Science Guy, spoke about his book from the road last week.

Your book includes sweeping approaches to address climate change. What can individuals do that counts?
Not wasting any water bottles is good. Not leaving the lights on is good. Turning the thermostat down in the winter, up in the summer, is good. But the best thing any of us in the developed world, especially in the United States, can be doing is talking about it. ... It's strangely a hard thing to talk about because it's become so political and divisive, and people have a tendency to give up and see it as overwhelming. But I claim that it's not.

You're truly optimistic?
The world's going to change climatically. We just want to control the change. We want to have a high quality of life for billions of people as we pass through this era.

How do you see your role as a citizen-scientist?
It is my mission to change the world. I'm not kidding: Make no small plans, dream mighty things. I feel if we get enough people engaged in climate change, we will get enough people to change the world. We will revolutionize the way we produce electricity and provide clean water to people.

And along with this ... is educating more women and girls. Because that is the surest route to controllably, manageably reducing the human population. Educated women have fewer kids. And the kids they do have are better cared for and are more successful. As I like to say, it's not one thing that we need to focus on. It's everything all at once.

You said that politicians should heed millennial voters on climate change. Is that generation especially receptive to taking action?
Overwhelmingly. College kids are very concerned about this. Recently, I visited Alabama, Tennessee and Texas. What you find on these college campuses (is that) everybody is, if I can use my term, enlightened. And the state has politicians who have been in office for years and years, and the two groups are at odds on climate change. Millennial voters are very concerned about climate change and will vote for candidates who are planning to address it. But the systems that are in place — people talk about gerrymandering and the money that's in politics, this is a real thing, a real effect — and it's hard for climate change-denying legislators to get voted out. But I predict it will happen.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Speaking out only the start of recovery

Swift Current blends the stories of former NHL player Sheldon Kennedy and younger victims who came forward after one of Kennedy's public talks. It airs Saturday on Global at 9 p.m. ET/PT. HANDOUT

DOCUMENTARY

Ex-NHL player still battles demons of sexual abuse

Liz Brown
Metro | Canada

It's been almost 20 years since former NHL player Sheldon Kennedy came forward with his story of sexual abuse at the hands of former Swift Current Broncos head coach Graham James.

In the years that followed, more victims shared their stories, James was jailed and Kennedy held up as a hero as he rollerbladed across Canada to raise money and awareness for sexual abuse victims.

Kennedy thought his disclosure would bring him peace, but the pain and trauma from those early years still haunted him as he battled alcoholism and cocaine addiction and had stints in jail.

At one point he found himself sitting with a gun, contemplating suicide.

"I think one of the biggest myths out there is once you tell your story, it's over," says Kennedy.

Swift Current, a new documentary about Kennedy and the struggles of sex abuse victims, aims to dispel that myth.

"This film paints a very visceral and cinematic portrait of how difficult it is to recover from sexual abuse trauma," says the doc's director Joshua Rofé. At first, Rofé says that Kennedy was reticent to work with him on the film, as he felt his story had already been told and there was nothing more to say.

But as their focus sharpened, they realized the story wasn't just Kennedy's, but a broader look at the healing journey.

"I think that this doc is told in a way of how the issues have evolved," says Kennedy, comparing The Sheldon Kennedy Story — the documentary about his life made in the late '90s — to Swift Current.

"If we look at the film that was made 17 years ago, it was just telling a story that showed this stuff happens, but I think we're at a point now where I believe (Swift Current) talks about solution.

This film paints a very visceral and cinematic portrait of how difficult it is to recover from sexual abuse trauma.
Director Joshua Rofé

It's about hope," he says.

Threaded through Kennedy's own recovery are the stories of two 21-year-old victims who spoke up at one of Kennedy's public talks at Durham College in Oshawa, Ont.

In front of 300 people, they told their own stories of abuse and asked Kennedy for help.

"These kids were dying to speak up," says Rofé, who felt compelled to include them in the documentary.

Rofé shows Kennedy sharing his story and helping these young victims deal with the aftermath of their abuse.

"The great comparison that Josh has made in this film is between them — they're 21 — and me, who's been grinding away trying to get healthy for 20 years; the two different places of recovery," says Kennedy.

Today, Kennedy is clean and works to advocate for better child protection policies in Canada and the U.S. and is the lead director at the Sheldon Kennedy Child Advocacy Centre in Calgary.

But he admits his recovery still requires day-to-day work.

"It's about having tools," he says.

"For me, that's attending meetings and advocacy, working out, and heading out to my farm to ground myself."

"What I'm good at is pushing for change and listening to the grassroots and pushing at the top to make things happen," he says.

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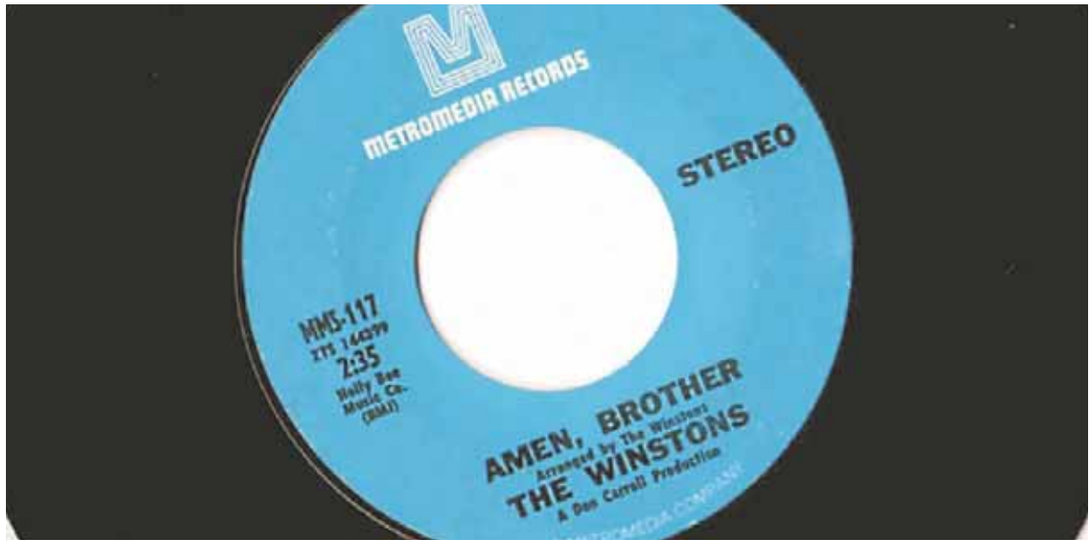

A snippet from the song Amen, Brother (known as the Amen Break) has been used by everyone from NWA to Slipknot, but until recently, its creators didn't receive any financial compensation. HANDOUT

In 1969, a DC soul outfit called The Winstons released a single called Color Him Father, which reached No. 2 on the Billboard Hot 100 and won a Grammy for Best R&B Song the following year. The B-side of that single received almost zero attention. Ten years later, though, that forgotten song dramatically changed the course of music.

Amen, Brother was an instrumental that riffed on a piece entitled Amen, written for a 1963 film entitled Lilies of the Field and then covered by The Impressions in 1964.

Once The Winstons recorded it, they immediately forgot about it — until they started hearing it again and again.

Starting in about 1980, a six-second snippet of the song — a drum break played by GC Coleman — began turning up in rap recordings.

As the decade progressed, these four bars were surgically excised from Amen, Brother and implanted into dozens, then hundreds and then thousands of new songs.

The Amen Break, as it became known, crept into hip hop, breakbeat, jungle, electronica, drums and bass, techno, industrial music, pop and rock as an often greatly manipulated loop of beats.

Coleman's beat was fed into digital recording software and sped up, slowed down, stretched, distorted and otherwise manipulated.

Checking the WhoSampled database, the Amen Break has been used in no fewer than 1,871 songs, ranging from NWA and the Prodigy to Slipknot and Janet Jackson. You have most definitely heard it.

And how much were The Winstons compensated for having a piece of their song used as the basis for so many others?

What did they earn for helping to change the face of music?

Zero. Nothing.

The Winstons' Richard Spencer — the holder of the copyright — could only shrug in dismay at this plagiarism.

It was flattering that so many people found these six seconds to be so useful, but shouldn't a little cash have come back to him?

Meanwhile. GC Coleman, the man who actually played those beats, died homeless in Atlanta in the fall of 2006.

A couple of British DJs, Martyn Webster and Steve Theobald, understood the injustice of the situation so they set up a GoFundMe campaign to raise some cash as compensation. People responded graciously.

Earlier this month, Richard Spencer was presented a check for £24,000 (about $50,000 CAD). Hey, it's only a fraction of what's owed, but at least is something, right?

For more, go to AJournalofMusicalThings.com or follow me on twitter at @alancross.

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Alessia Cara's Here to show she's real

Canadian singer-songwriter Alessia Cara released her first album Know-It-All last week. AFP

DEBUT ALBUM

Canadian teen scores record deal based on YouTube covers

Alessia Cara is quickly emerging as a breakout teen star but the singer is determined not only to avoid the pitfalls of celebrity, but to serve as a champion for those who feel out of place.

The 19-year-old won unexpected fame from her bedroom in suburban Toronto starting five years ago as she posted cover songs on YouTube, turning her rich soul voice on hits from artists including Lorde, Amy Winehouse and Taylor Swift, who recently invited her to perform at a concert.

Tongue-in-cheek

The covers, accompanied by tongue-in-cheek but strikingly accurate impressions of famous singers, led to a record deal with Def Jam, a prominent label best known for hip-hop, and Cara has spent the last two years writing an album.

Despite her fan base among teens, Cara picked the mature-sounding Here as the first single off Know-It-All, her debut album released on Friday.

On Here, set to an Isaac Hayes soul sample also used in the 1995 song Glory Box by English trip-hoppers Portishead, Cara sings with poise of her dread at a party "under clouds of marijuana" and loud but dull music.

"Excuse me if I seem a little unimpressed with this / An antisocial pessimist, but usually I don't mess with this," sings Cara, in a voice that brings memories of Winehouse.

Single-minded

Cara insisted on Here as the first single, even though "everybody said it's not really safe enough for radio."

"I said I didn't care," she told AFP after an album release party held, appropriately, at YouTube's studio in New York.

"It showed a side of my personality and it was a good introduction to me as an artist," she said.

"I didn't want to be placed in an automatic category of 'teen pop star'... the usual stupid comparisons. I wanted to steer away from that and show people that I'm real."

Viral hit

The song built slowly into a viral hit after its release in April, fuelled by its popularity online.

Here has been streamed more than 65 million times on Spotify and viewed more than 21 million times on YouTube.

Cara credited the song's success to fans who quietly nodded to the message of social isolation at parties, a theme comparatively rare for mainstream teenage pop.

"They feel like I've given them a voice or a platform to say — 'We feel the same way. We're not feeling it either,'" she said.

Cara — fast-talking and quick-witted when discussing her music — has kept up her flow of covers, recently uploading a version of fellow young Canadian singer Justin Bieber's Love Yourself.

'Terrified' of fame

While not mentioning Bieber or other tabloid-headlining stars by name, Cara said she was determined not to wade too far into the minefields of celebrity life.

"I'm not interested in the whole fame side of things and I'm not interested in the spotlight," she said.

"I know a lot of artists say that, but I do mean it. I'm terrified of it.

"I think you've just got to keep the right people around you and hope for the best, and just hope you don't wind up like some other people who have unfortunately fallen to their demise a little bit," she said with a laugh.

Winehouse effect

Yet Cara cites as a model a musician who had a notoriously troubled and brief life

Cara said that Winehouse offered an emotional poignancy with her tales of heartbreak, which the Canadian teenager had not felt directly.

"That's when I realized the power of music. I could feel something I've never gone through before." AFP

> **I'm not interested in the whole fame side of things and I'm not interested in the spotlight,**
> Alessia Cara

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4 SURPRISES FROM BILLBOARD'S GREATEST ALBUMS LIST

Billboard's list of the top 200 "Greatest of All Time" albums was released recently, and there are some unexpected hits on it. Ranked by a points system, the albums that made it to No. 1 scored higher that those that hung onto a lower spot on the charts for weeks. Here are the biggest upsets from Billboard's list of chart toppers.

AMANDA VALENTOVIC METRO NEW YORK

1 Michael Jackson isn't No. 1

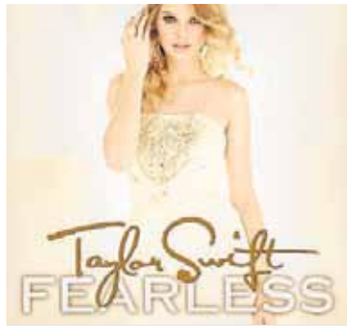
Michael Jackson's Thriller comes in at No. 3 behind 21 by Adele and the soundtrack to The Sound of Music. Even being the highest-selling record of all time wasn't enough to get MJ to the top, at least for Billboard.

2 Soundtracks are more popular than you thought

The Sound of Music claimed the second spot on the list, and while it's the highest-ranked movie soundtrack, it's not the only one. Doctor Zhivago and 2013 phenomenon Frozen are in the top 20, and High School Musical is on the list at No. 51 — before the Beatles' highest-ranked album.

3 Fearless bested 1989

Four out of Taylor Swift's five albums are on the all-time list, but the highest-ranked one is not what you would think — Fearless took the fourth spot and Swift's self-titled debut came in at 18. Even though the 64th ranked 1989 took the end of 2014 and beginning of 2015 by storm, Swift's country music still won out.



4 Beyonce is nowhere to be found

Beyonce doesn't even make an appearance with Destiny's Child, but even more surprising is that her iconic late 2013 album, Beyonce, didn't make the cut either. It was iTunes' fastest selling album ever, and has sold five million copies worldwide. It was also her fifth straight number one album, but still did not make the Greatest of All Time list.

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Blige encourages 'no more drama'

REAL TALK

R&B star to host inspiring Apple radio show for fans

R&B star Mary J. Blige is hoping she can offer love and support to those who "are sitting in their car in traffic about to jump out and kill somebody or kill themselves" with a positive and inspirational radio show.

The singer, who launched Real Talk this month on Apple Music's Beats 1 Radio, said she wants to motivate fans with her show — much like her songs have.

"So many people out there are hurting and there are so many people out there that need to be reached, and there are so many people I wish I could ... give a word of encouragement to," Blige said in an interview last week. "If I can reach somebody and say, '... You're beautiful and I go through the same things, too, and right now I'm thinking the same thing' — it means so much to them."

Blige, 44, added that if she "could have had Michael Jackson on a radio station back then, or had Janet Jackson talk to me when I was growing up, it would have meant the world to me."

Each episode of her show will be named after songs by Blige, whose hits include Not Gon' Cry, Real Love, Family Affair and No More Drama.

Her first show, My Life, looked back at her groundbreaking 1994 sophomore album of the same name.

"It was special to me because I got a chance to express to people that didn't know exactly what was happening during the making of the My Life album and what I was dealing with," said Blige, who was battling drug addiction at the time.

"Although I've come a long way and I've recovered and I'm strong and no one's going to hurt me again — or I would hope that no one hurts me again — just the feeling, just the nostalgia, just the memories are all very vivid and the same."

Her next episode, debuting Saturday and called Doubt, will include Demi Lovato, the 23-year-old singer-actress who entered rehab in 2010 to deal with an eating disorder, self-mutilation and other issues.

"It's really deep, it's really heavy, but it's really uplifting and inspiring. She speaks to a whole other generation that needs help, that's committing suicide every single day," Blige said. "Hopefully it helps someone."

Jimmy Iovine, who encouraged Blige to do the show, said when he worked with the singer at Interscope Records he thought she would be a great TV talk-show host.

"She's that girl. She's very powerful at articulating her truth and making people feel very comfortable when they're around her," Iovine said in an interview. "I feel that she's a natural for this and we love giving her the platform."

On her show, Blige also tried to recreate her Beats 1 Radio commercial with Taraji P. Henson and Kerry Washington, which went viral after it debuted during the Emmy Awards in September. Blige said Washington was unavailable, but an episode with Henson will debut Dec. 6 (the show airs biweekly at 2 p.m. EST).

"We're reminiscing and we're going back to her life in D.C.," Blige said of Henson, who stars on Empire on Fox. "We're friends so it's hilarious. We're having a ball, and we got deep, too."

Blige said more guests on her show will be announced at a later date. She said she's hoping to score an interview with first lady Michelle Obama.

"I definitely want to do it with Michelle Obama — if she will have me," Blige said. "That would be a dream come true."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Mary J. Blige, during Episode 3 of her new radio show, Real Talk. APPLE VIA THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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INTERVIEW

Rick Ross talks new album and 50 Cent, Meek and Wale

Rick Ross is dropping new remixes. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

For Rick Ross, it's been a juggling act for the self-proclaimed "bawse." The Grammy-nominated rapper is set to release his eighth album, Black Market, on Dec. 4, but his life is busy with more than just music.

What do you want listeners to take away from Black Market?
Black Market is the purest representation of me at my most comfortable form. The music is soulful and layered. It's sophisticated, but it's street.

You and 50 Cent had an exchange on social media recently. Why do you think he continues to attack you?
You ever ask yourself that?

People still look at it as beef.
Are you aware of his current financial status?

He filed for bankruptcy.
And when companies and corporations usually file for bankruptcy then, what?

You tell me.
You do that when it's over. It's called "when it's over." So rest in peace. R.I.P. Other than that, we are running around New York City (50 Cent's hometown) as we speak. The excitement in these streets for the new album, I'm dropping new remixes, I've been in the game since '06 and nobody has ever stepped on one of my sneakers. Not one, ya dig. That speaks for itself.

There's a lot of talking and tweeting in this industry, but who really getting money? Don't ever get it twisted. You see Jay Z, you see Puff Daddy, and right around there somewhere, you see (Rick Ross) is in the starting lineup. We put new chlorine in the pool weekly. It's a lot of distractions that's meant to distract you from staying focused.

There was some friction between your label mates Meek Mill and Wale.
It came and went. When things have potential to (become) something that's a problem, then I may get involved. ...I know in 10 years, they will be the same executives, if they are no longer artists, giving the next generation the right input. ...My job is to make sure they don't take it (too far) ... which will never happen. I put my life on that.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Moving? Get some Apartment Therapy

TIPS

A happy home begins before you even sign the lease

You could be forgiven for thinking that Apartment Therapy isn't exactly beginner-friendly. For as warm and inviting as the popular site is, it pretty much invented the genre of house porn. Each featured space is more gorgeous than the next, right down to the perfectly curated clutter and suspiciously well-groomed dogs.

That said, founder and "apartment therapist" Maxwell Ryan firmly believes that you don't need a master's degree in interior design to create a beautiful, inspiring space of your own.

His latest book, Apartment Therapy: Complete + Happy Home, starts at the very, very beginning — before you've signed a lease or written a down payment check, when hanging that gallery wall is the absolute least of your concerns.

Want to go home to one of the swoon-worthy abodes featured in the book's second section? Start by taking Ryan's first-stage tips.

THE FIRST 24 HOURS

Take it easy the night of the move — but the one thing you should attend to ASAP? The smoke alarm. Check the batteries before you even put sheets on the bed.

1. Shop discerningly

Before you sign anything, pay close attention to the big picture, not simply the space itself. A big red flag for renters? When the apartment looks nice, but the building's common areas are in disrepair.

"This can mean that only the cosmetics of the space are being kept up, but the maintenance of what you can't see might be lacking and potentially cause problems," says Ryan.

If you're buying, take a good, long look at both the block and the area.

"Think about the health of the surrounding neighborhood, not just the piece of property you are considering," he cautions.

"How do the homes around the home you might buy look? Are there more than one or two for sale? Are the businesses close by ones that you would consider using? Do they seem like they are thriving?"

2. Move smart

Moving should be exciting, not panic-attack-inducing. To cut down on the stress, plan ahead, and plan for the worst.

"Take an extra day or two off from work right around moving day," suggests Ryan. "Last-minute packing will be less stressful, and running errands for the things that you end up needing for the new place — that always crop up, no matter what — will be much more enjoyable when you aren't rushed or exhausted after a day at work."

3. Decorate slowly

Although moving is a great opportunity to explore your personal style and create a beautiful living space, don't rush anything.

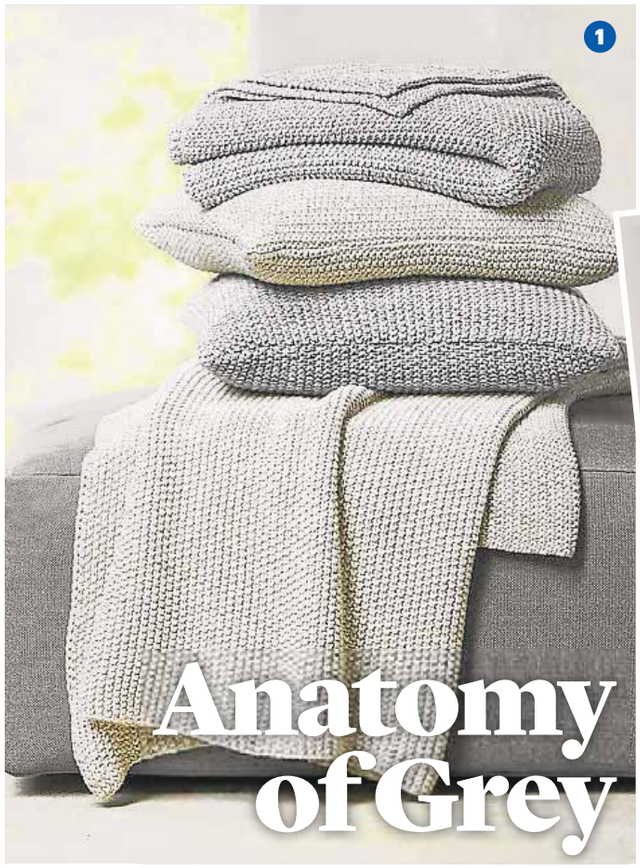
"You want to take your time and shop thoughtfully," says Ryan. "It's always best to live in a place for a bit before making any major design decisions or purchases so you aren't tempted to start scooping up things impulsively that might not make you happy long-term."

METRO U.S.

TIME WARP

Ryan's advice for furniture shoppers: "The style of a space and the style of your furniture and decor can be opposites," he says. "In fact, sometimes the push and pull between eras is exactly what makes an interior interesting and memorable. Modern furnishings in a room with vintage architectural details is fabulous, just as antique pieces can be in a streamlined, crisp, contemporary home."

First night in a new place: Forget breaking out the cookware — splurge a little and order in to celebrate, says Apartment Therapy site founder Maxwell Ryan. ISTOCK



Anatomy of Grey

We've seen the colour grey take over the fashion and decor world and it has no signs of stopping in 2016. Look for softer versions in popular home accessories for the coming year.

Karl Lohnes
For Metro Canada

1 Fisherman Knit Cushions and Throws
Tone on tone is the way to use the year's favourite neutral. From $30, Simons.ca

2 Barbara Barry Modern Drape Rod Window Panel, Silver
Pre-made and stylish curtains with crisp, clean lines help to soften windows. From $80, BedBathAndBeyond.ca

3 Sheridan Grey Kitchen Island
Movable and expandable — there's no excuse not to have a kitchen party this Christmas. $1,000, CrateAndBarrel.ca

4 Grey Owl OC-52
The perfect neutral colour for those old coloured walls. BenjaminMoore.ca

5 Verismo Silver 600 Brewer
Create your favourite Starbucks beverages with just the touch of a button — and from your own kitchen. $149, Starbucks.ca

6 Portrait Rubix Ottoman
James Culleton's furniture creation is patterned with the faces of the everyday man. Proceeds raised go to the Michaëlle Jean Foundation. $179, EQ3.com

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Donna Hay cooks The New Easy way

COOKING AT HOME

The Aussie food star talks recipes for everyday meals

Donna Hay is in her "absolute happy place" picking through a bunch of fresh mint.

The Australian food personality slips the perfect leaves into an ice bath. She sets the imperfect ones (most of them, in fact) aside.

"Only the pretty ones survive," sighs Hay with a hint of guilt. "It's terrible. It's Next Top Model: Mint."

Hay — a prolific cookbook author, magazine editor, TV personality and food stylist — is in the Torstar test kitchen cooking from her newest book. The New Easy: 135+ clever solutions and flavour-packed recipes for weeknights and weekends is her 23rd book.

Hay has always made gorgeous look easy. Now she makes easy look easy.

She has asked to make her spiced lamb and tahini tart. The dish (which isn't a tart by Canadian definitions) slathers an ordinary pita with hummus and tops it with ground lamb mixed with pine nuts, honey, dried mint and a North African spice blend called ras el hanout.

You're allowed to just scatter the perfumed meat mixture on the pita, but Hay can't help herself. She rolls the meat into tiny, perfect marble-sized balls while she talks.

Still, the pitas are ready for the oven in minutes.

"It speaks to me," Hay says of the Middle Eastern-inspired dish, "because I actually just cooked this at home. I think the reason my children like this is because I'm not a huge believer in standing over them to make them eat their vegetables."

Her boys — 12-year-old Angus and 9-year-old Tom — like their vegetables to come alongside dips. Tom calls this lamb pita concoction "dip pizza." Both sons can make it themselves.

Hay is passionately devoted to getting people to cook at home.

"I think restaurants have a really great place in my life, but I don't want to try to emulate something too difficult at home, even on the weekend — I just don't have time."

The New Easy promises to simplify kitchen life with new flavour combinations and new shortcuts. There are quick weeknight meals and special weekend dishes, with shorter chapters for salads/sides, baking and desserts. "Re-style" tips show you how to tweak and present dishes into something new.

Hay adores basic ingredients that are simply prepared. She lives in multicultural Sydney in a country spoiled for choice when it comes to fresh food. But she's best known for her exquisite food styling.

Hay doesn't fake her pictures. She uses a water sprayer, paint brush and oil to gloss things up, but shoots only in natural light and says her team of 20 eats everything they cook.

"I think styling has got a lot more casual," she muses. "It's a little bit messier and little bit more inclusive so people don't feel so pressured to perform."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

People may fall for the pictures in her cookbooks says Donna Hay, but "then they're pleasantly surprised by the ingredient list and the fact the method is short and concise." MAIN PHOTO CONTRIBUTED; FOOD PHOTO: TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

RECIPE

Spiced Lamb + Hummus Pita
Serves 4

Ingredients
- 4 large pitas (about 9 inch/23 cm)
- 2 cups (500 mL) homemade or store-bought hummus
- About 1-1/2 lb (675 g) ground lamb
- 1 Tbsp (15 mL) dried mint
- 2 Tbsp (30 mL) liquid honey
- 1 Tbsp (15 mL) ras el hanout spice blend (a North African/Moroccan blend of about 12 spices)
- 1/2 cup (125 mL) pine nuts
- Kosher salt + freshly ground black pepper

For serving
- Plain Greek yogurt
- Fresh mint leaves
- Lemon wedges

Directions

1. Place pitas on parchment-lined baking sheets. Spread with hummus, leaving 1/2-inch (2-cm) border.

2. In bowl, combine lamb, dried mint, honey, ras el hanout and pine nuts. Season with salt and pepper. Sprinkle lamb over hummus. (Or form into marble-sized meatballs and arrange neatly on pita.)

3. Bake in preheated 400F (200C) oven until lamb is cooked through and golden brown, about 12 to 15 minutes.

4. Cut pitas into wedges. Serve topped with yogurt and sprinkled with sumac and fresh mint leaves. Pass lemon wedges separately.

ADAPTED AND RENAMED FROM THE NEW EASY.

WORD OF MOUTH

Saying bonjour to the day

Theresa Albert
For Metro Canada

This week we are all Parisians; shaking our collective head, trying to comprehend the disruption that shook the world. Parisians are hearty and resilient, and they will carry on. In Paris today, you will still see people on their way to work with their smart outfits and slightly sleepy look in need of caffeine. Their culture includes taking time to enjoy eating and drinking together.

- Coffee is never sipped from a massive cup in a hustle. It is rare to see someone walk and eat or drink at the same time. Typically, Parisians will order a smallish espresso usually in a proper cup and sit to enjoy the moment as well as the perk of a few sips of caffeine. Many bistros and coffee houses don't even carry take-out cups with lids.
- During the morning rush, small and simple pastries or breads rather than big egg sandwiches tide Parisians over. If you see someone ordering a large plate of eggs they are likely foreigners. Unless it is Saturday and after 10 a.m. — then they will join friends and talk about life over a hearty meal of reasonable size.
- A piece of fruit and a handful of nuts could even be considered sustenance until the lunch hour which goes from noon to 2 p.m. Working lunches do happen and they do include wine, but the meal is the more important than the business meal.

The fact is, in France, every meal is a celebration of life.

Theresa is an on-camera food and health expert, nutritionist and writer who loves to spread the word on food

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DAY IN THE LIFE

Comedian talks her favourite hangouts and pastimes

Steve Gow
For Metro Canada

Sarah Silverman may have grown up in New Hampshire, but the popular comedian certainly relates more to New York — in particular Lower Manhattan, where she blossomed as an edgy standup comic. While her upcoming, critically acclaimed drama I Smile Back and a new HBO comedy special (premiering Nov. 23) have kept her busy lately, Silverman always gets back to the city that makes her "heart just swell." We caught up to uncover her ideal day in The Big Apple.

Washington Square Park in Greenwich Village is the ideal spot for people-watching. ISTOCK

The Comedy Cellar is like my home, I love it.

Brunch at the deli

Begin your day with a late-morning brunch at B&H Dairy (facebook.com/BHDairyKosherRestaurant) — an East Village staple for more than seven decades.

"It's a tiny hole-in-the-wall," laughs Silverman, of her go-to daytime diner. "They have the best soup, the best challah bread and it's a kosher deli. I have no religion at all, but I am a vegetarian so it's the only matzo ball soup I can eat because it's not made with chicken fat."

Walk in the park

"My favourite thing to do in the world is just walking the streets of New York," admits Silverman. But nowhere is patrolling the pavement better-suited than nearby Washington Square Park in Greenwich Village (washingtonsquareparkconservancy.org).

Notably renowned for the iconic 123-year-old Washington Square Arch, this gorgeous urban garden plays host to everyone from students to street performers to chess enthusiasts, making the historical square once known for public executions now the ideal spot for people-watching.

Dinner with Frank

A mere 12-minute stroll back into the East Village will land you at Silverman's favourite supper stop. A small, uncompromising eatery, Frank (frankrestaurant.com) boasts an astonishing wine list and serves up authentic Italian entrees like Rigatoni al Ragu for a reasonable price.

"It's loud, it's small, you can't have any adjustments on your order (and) it's cash only — it's one of those places," says Silverman. "But it is the best Italian food in New York City."

Laugh the night away

Make your way back to Greenwich Village to finish your evening rolling in the cramped aisles of Silverman's favourite comedy club.

"The Comedy Cellar (comedycellar.com) is like my home, I love it," explained Silverman of the legendary basement bar where one can often catch surprise sets by the likes of Chris Rock or Louis CK.

Afterwards, Silverman suggests winding down around the corner at their sister club The Village Underground. After all, "that's where all the comics hang out."

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5 GIFT SUGGESTIONS FOR THOSE ON THE GO

Wondering what to get the traveller on your holiday list? Here are a few ideas:

1 Multi-tool wonder

Move over, Swiss Army knife — there is a new multi-tool available this season and you can wear it on your wrist. Worn as a bracelet, the Leatherman Tread is 25 tools in one; each link of this bracelet is a stainless steel implement, from various-sized screwdrivers to a bottle opener to a pick/SIM card tool. It is designed to be customizable with slotted fasteners so you can rearrange links, add new ones, and adjust to your wrist size. Available for $155 at Mountain Equipment Co-op or online at mec.ca.

2 Haulin' it

If your special someone needs new luggage, Bentley's black and red Air Canada Quest Hardside Spinner conforms to Air Canada flight regulations. Each component of the three-piece luggage set is designed with four spinner wheels, two zippered compartments, tie-down straps and a telescopic handle. The pieces are sold separately; the carry-on retails for $109.99 CAD, the 24" for $119 and the 28" for $139. If you purchase online at shopbentley.com the shipping is free.

3 No ordinary towel

Discovery Trekking's ultra fast-dry towels have silver anti-microbial technology, which makes them odour-resistant. They fold up compactly to slip into a suitcase or carry-on bag and are multifunctional; they can also be used as a sarong, a scarf and a travel blanket for the car or plane. See discoverytrekking.com.

4 Memories

With a Travelzoo.ca gift certificate you are not only giving some unique travel experiences, but you are saving money. A stay at the Auberge Saint-Antoine in Quebec City, voted one of the best hotels in the world by Travel + Leisure Magazine, is $179 (a savings of 35 per cent), dinner for two at Bauhaus in Vancouver, featuring a tasting menu by a Michelin-starred chef will set you back $120 (a savings of 45 per cent) and a Niagara-on-the-Lake Culinary Walking Tour for two is only $55 (a savings of 44 per cent). **LOREN CHRISTIE/FOR METRO**

5 A good flight's rest

Looking for a cheap and cheerful stocking stuffer? Colourful and practical, an Austin House memory foam neck pillow is perfect for sleeping on an airplane. The fleece is removable and washable. Pick one up at Staples or your local CAA office.

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Easy to find your groove in Memphis

TENNESSEE

Enjoy its rich history, its love of music, and plenty of beer

This city loves its music. It protects its history. And it's really starting to like its beer.

Travellers to Memphis need to know the basics of this Tennessee city nestled along the Mississippi River. It is a capital of blues, rock and roll and soul music, a gritty city where influential musicians like B.B. King, Elvis Presley and Otis Redding lived and worked.

It is a city rich in history, where cotton trading was once the main economic engine, where Confederate and Union gunboats battled on the river during the Civil War, where Martin Luther King Jr. came to support striking city sanitation workers and was assassinated.

And, it's a city that likes to have fun, whether it's on world-famous Beale Street or in the breweries that have started making craft beers in recent years.

Here are some essentials for visiting Memphis:

What's new

It took 34 years, but the Blues Hall of Fame finally opened in May on South Main Street, a neighbourhood undergoing significant revitalization.

Founded in 1980, the non-profit Blues Foundation has inducted about 130 performers and dozens of others into the Hall of Fame, but only now does it have a brick-and-mortar location for where music-lovers can see memorabilia attached to their favourite blues musicians, from B.B. King to Robert Johnson to Pinetop Perkins.

The building sits across the street from the National Civil Rights Museum and near art galleries, restaurants and bars just south of the downtown area. Artifacts include clothing, paintings, bronze busts, records and magazines tied to the world's most influential blues masters. There's also an interactive database.

CRAFT BREWERS IN THE SPOTLIGHT

A beer-brewing revolution has hit Memphis in recent years. At Memphis Made brewery, long tables give it the feel of a German beer garden, and Wiseacre has an outdoors area for chilling out.

A memorial outside the club of B.B. King on Beale Street in May, following the blues legend's death. Beale Street is home to various live music venues and shops. KAREN PULFER FOCHT/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Classic attractions

One of America's most popular attractions sits in Memphis: Graceland, the home-turned-museum celebrating all things Elvis. The house is open for tours, and the attraction across the street features Elvis-related exhibits, including a neat one displaying vehicles owned and used by Elvis, from a Ferrari to a Harley-Davidson. A new 450-room hotel, Guest House at Graceland, is under construction, scheduled to open October 2016.

Other classic music spots include Sun Studio, where Elvis, Jerry Lee Lewis, Carl Perkins, Johnny Cash and Charlie Rich recorded music; and Stax Records, where Redding, Sam & Dave, the Staple Singers, Isaac Hayes and others cut songs in the raw, soulful "Memphis sound."

A walk down Beale Street reveals well-worn, but fun, live music venues in Rum Boogie Cafe and W.C. Handy's Blues Hall. There are plenty of shops to get that shot glass or T-shirt for a friend or relative. A visit to Blues City Cafe will not disappoint, as it serves four of Memphis's main food groups: barbecue ribs, fried catfish, hot tamales and Jack Daniel's.

The National Civil Rights Museum tells the story of the history of the civil rights movement, and its important moments and figures. Built on the location of the old Lorraine Motel — where Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated in April 1968 — it features a view of the room where King stayed at the hotel.

Finally, a visit to the Memphis Zoo, ranked as one of the nation's best zoos annually, is a must-do. Giant pandas, hungry hippos and playful penguins are among the living attractions. During the winter holidays, the zoo has a Christmas lights display and ice skating.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Toys to change how kids play

Jen Taplin

The gift-giving challenge is on — finding and picking out those just-right presents for our little ones, while ensuring we check off "everything" on their holiday wish lists.

We want to put something under the tree that our kids will go nuts over, while making smart choices, so gifts aren't tossed aside before Boxing Day.

It's a challenge toy companies embrace, putting their best products forward to help parents — and aunts, uncles, grandparents, whoever — wrap up the ideal gifts for kids.

A team from Toys "R" Us Canada spends the year tracking worldwide trends in preparation for its annual holiday hit list, said company spokesman Tamar Nersesian.

"Many of the toys on our holiday hot-toy list are changing the way kids play, using the latest innovations to make toys more interactive, endless, responsive and personalized than they have ever been before," Nersesian said.

Here are some of the toys that made the hot list:

Mega Bloks Despicable Me – Build-A-Minion ($69.99, Toys "R" Us); the Little Live Pets Clever Keet — that sings, dances and drives its own cart ($74.99, Toys "R" Us; Nerf N-Strike Modulus ECS-10 Blaster ($64.86, Walmart); and the LEGO Star Wars Millennium Falcon ($179.86, Walmart).

David Niggli, president of the American catalogue company Chasing Fireflies, said personalized toys are extra special because they can be kept as keepsakes. They have a Design Your Own Princess Dress, plus a line of personalized plush toys.

"I think parents and kids are looking for things that spark their creativity and imagination, and also allow them to be part of creating the play pattern," Niggli said.

Parents want more from toys than simple entertainment, said Diane Goveia-Gordon, president at MGA Entertainment Canada.

"We are seeing a lot of demand from parents for toys that teach S.T.E.A.M. (science, technology, engineering, art, and math)," she said. Goveia-Gordon highlights Project Mc2 fashion dolls ($29.99, Toys "R" Us), which come with experiment kits so kids can build their own lava lamp or volcano.

Other heavy hitters in the MGA line up this year include the Little Tikes Lil' Explorers Three-in-One Adventure Course ($79.90, Amazon.ca) for little ones, and the Bratz #SelfieSnaps Photobooth ($68.86, Walmart) for older girls.

Mattel has an arsenal of best sellers, but there are a few that really stick out as sure bets this year. Riza Javellana, spokeswoman with Mattel Canada, said classic toys which provide open-ended play are the go-to this year.

"Open-ended play allows each child the freedom to make play their own without rules or requirements," she said.

Top picks are the Fisher-Price Smart Toy-Bear ($124.99, Toys "R" Us), the Hot Wheels Ultimate Garage ($149.99, Toys "R" Us) and the Barbie Saddle 'N Ride Feature Horse ($59.97 Walmart).

Hasbro's list of top sellers this season is what the toymaker calls interactive and face-to-face, including: Playmation Marvel's Avengers ($119.96, Amazon.ca); the Pie Face game ($19.93, Walmart); and Play All Day Elmo ($59.94, Walmart).

Catherine Belknap and Natalie Telfer, who operate a mom's online club called Social Common, test drove toys for Fisher-Price.

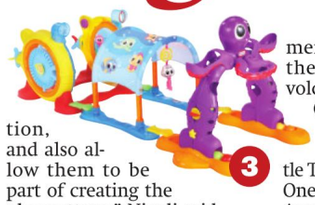
"Toys that are innovative, and encourage both imagination and physical activity are the big trend," Belknap said.

Telfer said they really like Bright Beats Dance & Move BeatBo ($49.99, Toys "R" Us).

"It's perfect for creating a family dance party," she said.

Kids want toys that are fun while parents are on the lookout for durable toys that both educate and encourage imaginative and physical play, Telfer said.

"We want to purchase toys that will continue to stimulate them as they grow, and hopefully keep their attention for more than a few months in the playroom," added Belknap.



1. Project Mc2 Fashion Dolls ($29.99, Toys "R" Us)
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4. Barbie Saddle 'N Ride Feature Horse ($59.97, Walmart)
5. Playmation Marvel's Avengers ($119.96, Amazon.ca)

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metro SPORTS
Weekend, November 20-22, 2015

Votes pour in for Bringer of Rain

Josh Donaldson became just the second Blue Jay to be named the American League's top player.
NATHAN DENETTE/
THE CANADIAN PRESS

MLB

Writers agree with Toronto fans' MVP chants

Josh Donaldson heard the MVP chants rain down on him from the Rogers Centre crowd for much of the 2015 season.

While Toronto fans got their wish Thursday night as the Blue Jays third baseman was named the American League MVP, Donaldson said he never let the crowd noise affect his play.

"I remember the first time I heard it and it was kind of like, 'OK these guys are starting to get pretty serious about what's going on here,"' Donaldson said on a conference call. "I recognized that I was having a pretty good season at the moment ... but I understood too that there was a lot of season left and my goals aren't necessarily to win MVPs but to help my team win.

"When I was in Oakland (the fans) started (chanting) for me as well and sometimes I would almost let it become a distraction — not to the point where I was nervous about them chanting that, but I wanted to come through so much for them ... I would almost put more pressure on myself," he added.

"This year I understood ... I stayed focused on the task at hand, which was winning games, and I was able to accomplish that."

> **The best of the best!!! Without a doubt!!!**
> Jose Bautista (@JoeyBats19) in a tweet after Donaldson won AL MVP

Donaldson hit .297 with a league-best 123 runs batted in to help the Blue Jays to their first AL East title — and first playoff appearance — since 1993.

The 29-year-old beat Los Angeles Angels outfielder Mike Trout for the honours.

What was characterized as a close race leading up to Thursday's announcement turned out to be an easy win for Donaldson, who took 23 first-place votes and seven second-place votes.

Washington Nationals outfielder Bryce Harper was a unanimous choice as National League MVP. Harper became the youngest unanimous MVP winner in baseball history, capturing the NL award despite his Washington Nationals missing the playoffs.

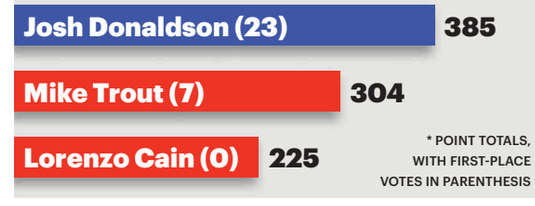
Harper turned 23 on Oct. 16, after the playoffs had already started. He got all 30 first-place votes from members of the Baseball Writers' Association of America.

Donaldson joined 1987 winner George Bell as the only Blue Jays players to be named AL MVP.

"Enjoy the club, man," Bell said in a video message sent out by the Blue Jays. "I'm glad for you, for your family and for Toronto Blue Jays fans."

THE CANADIAN PRESS, WITH FILES FROM THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

COUNTING THE BALLOTS



* POINT TOTALS, WITH FIRST-PLACE VOTES IN PARENTHESIS

GSP knows Rousey's pain

UFC

Former champ had to get over his 'nightmare' upset to Serra

Georges St-Pierre feels (Rowdy) Ronda Rousey's pain like perhaps no other. Eight years before Rousey was dethroned by Holly Holm at UFC 193, St-Pierre lost his welterweight crown to Matt (The Terror) Serra at UFC 69 in a shocking upset of his own.

A happy-go-lucky sort, Serra (8-4) had to win a season of The Ultimate Fighter reality TV show devoted to veterans making a comeback just to earn a title shot. St-Pierre, then 13-1 as a pro, was a 10-1 favourite to dispatch Serra.

The younger Montreal MMA star had just avenged a 2004 loss to Matt Hughes, widely viewed as the greatest welterweight champion ever, to claim the 170-pound crown at UFC 65 in November 2006. Serra needed just three minutes 25 seconds in April 2007 to dethrone St-Pierre in his first title defence. "This is my worst nightmare," St-Pierre said that night in Houston.

The previously unbeaten Rousey, who went into last weekend's fight as MMA's reigning rock star, is living her own nightmare now — a 20-1 favourite left unconscious and bleeding.

"It's unfortunate for Ronda but I'm happy for Holly at the same time," St-Pierre, who like Holm had coach Greg Jackson in his corner, said in an interview Thursday.

"In this game, no one's invincible," he added. "Sometimes you zig when you should zag." St-Pierre lost his confidence along with his championship belt, but eventually remade his game.

In a way for Ronda it's sad that she lost, but maybe it could be the best thing that ever happened to her, in that she will come back much stronger.
George St. Pierre

"So in a way for Ronda it's sad that she lost, but maybe it could be the best thing that ever happened to her, in that she will come back much stronger."

St-Pierre did. He won 12 fights in a row after losing his title, thumping Serra at UFC 83 in April 2008 to regain his crown.

He stepped away from the sport in late 2013 and, now 34, says he has yet to decide whether he will come back. While both St-Pierre and Rousey fell victim to upsets, their cases are different.

The Canadian was a newly crowned champion. Rousey had made five successful title defences and had been demolishing all comers.

While Rousey looked in trouble from the get-go against Holm's striking, St-Pierre had been doing well against Serra until the unthinkable happened. After Serra caught him on the back of his head, St-Pierre lost his equilibrium and fell backwards.

Holly Holm, left, lands a punch on Ronda Rousey during their title fight in Melbourne, Australia. Holm pulled off a stunning upset win with a 2nd round KO. ANDY BROWNBILL/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The end quickly followed. The defeat rocked St-Pierre. "The fact that I lost made me realize that I was a human being," he said.

On the advice of sports psychologist Brian Cain, St-Pierre looked to rid himself of the mental albatross of his title defeat by scrawling Serra's name onto a brick and hurling it into the icy waters off the South Shore. "Actually I thought it was kind of weird but I felt better after," St-Pierre said. THE CANADIAN PRESS

NHL IN BRIEF

Penguins edge Colorado
Sidney Crosby and Evgeni Malkin scored to help the Penguins beat the Colorado Avalanche 4-3 on Thursday night in Pittsburgh.

David Perron and Chris Kunitz each scored their third goals. Tyson Barrie got his first goal this season and Matt Duchene scored twice for Colorado. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Hat trick for Eriksson
Loui Eriksson scored three goals and the Bruins beat the slumping Minnesota Wild 4-2 on Thursday night in Boston.

Eriksson wrapped up his third career hat trick when he converted a perfect give-and-go from David Krejci. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sharks nip Flyers in OT
Melker Karlsson scored 3:45 into overtime and Martin Jones made 34 saves in his third shutout of the season, giving the San Jose Sharks a 1-0 victory over the Flyers on in Philadelphia Thursday night. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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RECIPE Grilled Ham Apple and Cheese Sandwich

PHOTO: MAYA VISNYEI

Ceri Marsh & Laura Keogh
For Metro Canada

You made it to Friday! And you totally deserve this amped up grilled cheese with salty ham and sweet apple.

Ready in
Prep time: 10 minutes
Serves 2

Ingredients
- 4 pieces whole grain bread
- 2 Tbsp butter, softened
- 4 slices ham
- 1 cup cheddar, grated
- 1/2 Granny Smith apple, thinly sliced
- 1 Tbsp mayonnaise
- 1 Tbsp yogurt
- 1 tsp Dijon mustard

Directions
1. Mix the mayo, yogurt and mustard in a small bowl.
2. Warm up a large skillet to medium heat. Butter one side of two pieces of bread and place them bread butter side down in the pan. Spread the mayo mix evenly across the upward facing slices while they're in the pan.
3. Divide the grated cheese in half and sprinkle it over the bread. Now lay two slices of ham onto each piece of bread. Now add a layer of apple slices. Top with the other pieces of buttered bread, butter side out.
4. Place a small frying pan or plate over the sandwiches and then top it with something heavy, like a can of tomatoes. Check to see if it's ready to flip after the first piece of bread has been in the pan for about five minutes. When it looks crisp and golden, flip over and repeat the pressing action. Cook on the other side about another five minutes, but keep an eye on it. Remove sandwiches from the pan, slice in half and serve.

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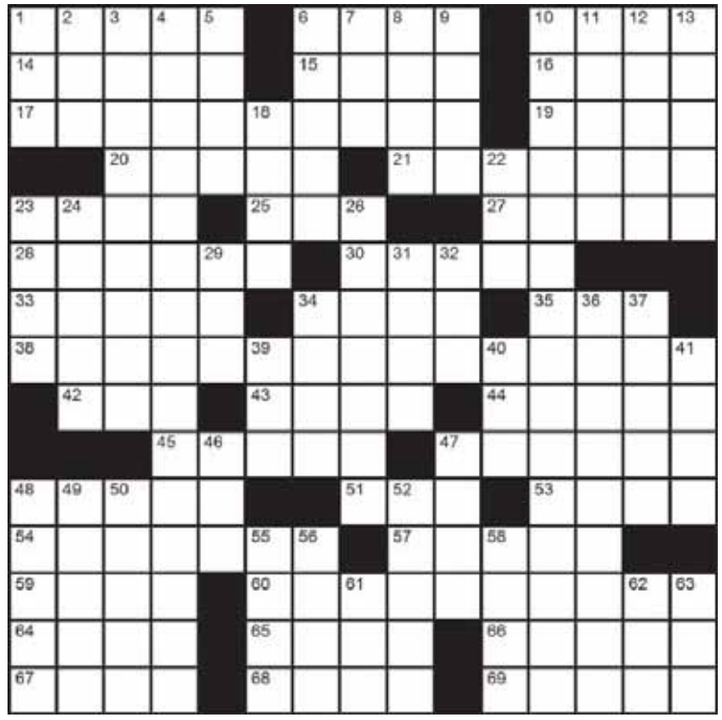
CROSSWORD Canada Across and Down

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



ACROSS
1. Glassmaking ovens
6. "__ with Anna Olson" on Food Network Canada
10. Nature's green carpeting
14. Projecting window
15. Online auction site
16. Tom Jones' "__ __ Should Ever Leave You"
17. Hit tunes, TV shows, Bestsellers, etc.: 2 wds.
19. Talk
20. Springy sticks
21. Driveway surface
23. Hershey's treat
25. "Case of the Ex" songstress
27. Willie of '80s sitcom "Charles in Charge"
28. "See? Isn't that eggsactly what I said?": 2 wds.
30. Wire
33. "Family Ties" mother
34. US crash-investigating agcy.
35. Calif. NBA team
38. Traditional handcrafted blankets: 2 wds.
42. Sun. church delivery
43. Amazes
44. Piece of land
45. Greek mythology shield
47. Band-Aid injury
48. Mine entrances
51. '1000 Forms of Fear' songstress
53. "The Lion King" (1994) lioness
54. Canadian city with the slogan 'Our Tide Is Rising'
57. __-examination
59. Sacred symbol of ancient Egypt
60. Persuasive marketing spiel: 2 wds.
64. Lacquered metalware
65. "Lean __ __" by Bill Withers
66. "Be _ __ and get..." (Sugary request starter)
67. Angry snits
68. Without
69. Flavour-adders to dishes

DOWN
1. Shear
2. 'Ranch' suffix
3. Montreal... Louis-_ Lafontaine Bridge-Tunnel (St. Lawrence River crossing)
4. Sound effects from the DJ's turntable: 2 wds.
5. Garden invader
6. American flag seamstress, __ Ross (b.1752 - d.1836)
7. __ Dhabi
8. Songwriter Ms. DioGuardi
9. Optometrist's study
10. Toronto-born actor whose credits include "Total Recall" (1990), "The Perfect Storm" (2000) and Canadian outlaw biker gang miniseries "The Last Chapter": 2 wds.
11. Slice __ __ (Carnivore's sandwich ingredient)
12. Sedimentary rock
13. Cobblestones
18. Casa __ (Toronto attraction)
22. Chum
23. Footprint
24. Caffeine nuts
26. Rachel McAdams' profession
29. Repeated word in "She Loves You" by The Beatles
31. Questions
32. Lettered sauce
34. "__ get it!" (Aha! moment)
36. Carving material
37. Mil. rank: 2 wds.
39. "__ the Dog" (1997)
40. __-Aztecan languages
41. Plato's promenade
46. Cornerstone abbr.
47. Taverns
48. Family of Italian violin makers
49. Blood giver
50. Linen tape for trimmings
52. Slurpee-like frozen beverages
55. Bears: Spanish
56. Cute-style grandmother
58. Colourful fish
61. Alphabetic trio
62. Taxi
63. Timecard abbrs.

IT'S ALL IN THE STARS by Sally Brompton

Aries March 21 - April 20
Know when to push for what you want but also when to back off. With both the Sun and Mercury moving into one of the best areas of your chart it won't take much to get the good things in life.

Taurus April 21 - May 21
It will be easy to get impatient today but with Mercury's entry into the area of your chart that governs joint financial matters you'll need all your energy for more important issues.

Gemini May 22 - June 21
Work hard but once you reach your targets reward yourself with plenty of rest and relaxation. Also, don't be too eager to confide your fears to people you don't know if you can trust.

Cancer June 22 - July 23
Bring what you've been working on to a conclusion and you will have accomplished something truly worthwhile. The Sun in Scorpio unleashed the creative side of your nature — now enjoy the rewards.

Leo July 24 - Aug. 23
You will have to deal with a rather emotional situation today, one that threatens to bring grievances to the surface. You must face your inner demons as well as external enemies.

Virgo Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
You will be remarkably persuasive today: your way with words will win over everyone. You will also have to deal with situations that call for a more hands-on approach.

Libra Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
Money doesn't have to be the center of your universe but you do need to make sure you get what you deserve. You've worked long and hard — don't let others take the benefits from you.

Scorpio Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
Do something dramatic before the Sun moves out of your birth sign on Sunday. Any doubts you've had must be swept away. If it feels right to you then it does not matter what the rest of the world thinks about it.

Sagittarius Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
There is something you need to clear up before the Sun moves into your sign at the weekend. This is the one and only chance you will get, so don't waste it.

Capricorn Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
You may be wondering why everyone is being so nice but don't let your doubts hold you back. You are liked and everyone wants to help.

Aquarius Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
You may be a recluse but you need to get engaged with the world. If you approach someone in a position of power with a request there is every chance it will be granted, so what are you waiting for?

Pisces Feb. 20 - March 20
Your confidence has been sky-high and you certainly won't be afraid to take chances. That the possibility of failure never enters your mind means that success is more likely — maybe even guaranteed.

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU by Dave Green

Every row, column and box contains 1-9

			2		1			
		1	3		5	6		
	5						7	
6	4						2	7
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YOU WILL BE RESTORED

It takes patience and perseverance to forge ahead even in the face of opposition and obstacles. Isaac was a victim of stiff opposition from the Philistine before he was restored, " he moved from there and dug another well, and they did not quarrel over it. So he called its name Rehoboth, because he said, "For now the Lord has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land."Genesis 26:22 NKV). Peradventure you are facing challenges that have resulted into losses, God of restoration will reward you.

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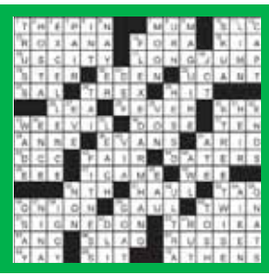

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6	1	8	9	2	5	4	7	3
9	5	7	4	3	6	1	2	8
3	4	2	7	8	1	9	6	5

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